# MUST WOMAN EVER AND MAN NEVER FORGIVE?

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BY

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Dedicated to
My Dear Mother

# PREFACE

In submitting my story, I am laying no claim to erudition whatever, and I therefore crave the indulgence of my reader as to the defects to be encountered. I am endeavoring, only, to faithfully portray the events of my narrative as they are being recalled from the past.

THE AUTHOR.

# CHAPTER I.

## WARDS OF THE STATE

JOHN ANDREWS and his faithful wife, Mary, were a middle-aged couple who had always lived in M——, in the state of New York. He was, at the beginning of my story, and had been for many years, a rather prosperous merchant in M——, and had accumulated sufficient means to enable him to retire, as he contemplated, from business. Always living in the highest esteem of all who knew them in the little town where they had spent all of their married life, it was a valuable asset to any of their acquaintances to have known or have had the friendship of either of them. Indeed, their lives were generally accepted as the models, so frequently pointed to and held up as worthy of emulation by every one. He had achieved his success in business by reason of his untiring industry and unquestioned business integrity. His honesty of purpose in all that he engaged, was the well accepted assumption of every one. Kind hearted, and with a most conspicuous generosity in all things, he was easily recognized as an influence for the betterment of the community.

He and his wife were very properly known as very high types of both man and woman,—not only religious in the extreme, but Christians in the broad

sense that made them factors, whether in the church or society of the little village. They had become so identified as necessary to the hearts of their friends that they were regarded as permanent and indispensable citizens. Familiar figures in every avenue of charity, their kind and loving hearts had gone out to relieve with their wealth, much of misfortune and misery. No task was too great for either when it came to assisting the poor and unfortunate; and their abilities to render aid were always exerted with such eagerness, that there was never any discount as to the motives actuating them in the accomplishment of the charity performed. Where would be the one, there could be found the other. They worked in social and religious life with greatest accord and harmony, and there was a continuous and unbroken thread of golden memory that their lives had woven around the hearts of their friends, that lasted the life time of those who came in contact with them.

They were frequently referred to as being the more than contentedly happy couple of the town. And why not? They were possessed of more than a competence for the rest of their lives. They were in fact, somewhat wealthy. Their home, though not elegant, was the most costly and pretentious of the village. They lived with all of the necessities and luxuries, incident to their station as to wealth and environment. By their neighbors, they were seen and known for their affection for each other, and apparently there was not a marring feature to pre-

vent happiness being theirs. When numbers of their friends were entertained in their home, nothing but happiness seemed to reign. Every comfort was there. Their friends were legion in number. And yet, there was a spectre that stalked always across the hearthstone of their home. There was one ray of sunshine that had never streamed into or had entered their lives. There was absent a realization of the dream of both of them. There was more in demand than property and wealth and even good and true friends, and their hearts had the silent and constant yearning for the finger of time to touch them with the gentleness of God's love.

But, childless as they were, and with all hope gone, they had gone through their entire lives without murmur or complaint of any kind, bearing the burden of their mutual sorrow with real fortitude, characteristic of them. Oft times, when John would see the boundless love which his affectionate wife would manifest for children and had observed the fleeting shadow come across his wife's countenance, a sigh of regret would escape him. Once, after his wife had relinquished her hold upon a little child, with which she had been playing, to its mother, he had seen a tear silently roll down her cheek. He had quietly at that time kissed her, without comment, but the incident together with others of like significance, was frequently called to his mind. As the long years rolled by, they had ceased to mention, or in any way refer to their great disappointment. Silence upon this subject was never broken when they were

alone. Their mutual understanding seemed to be that though a source of sorrow, yet that it be not mentioned.

Time, instead of becoming a solace, had rather deepened the yearning of each of them, for the voice that never came. They stood ready with heart and hand to welcome the one of their heart's greatest desire. All that was necessary to make full the cup of happiness of both of them was the prattle of the playful child, that they could worship as their own. Their lives became and were beautiful commentaries upon the laws of Nature that see the uplift of God's wish that paternity and maternity should be the real foundation of happiness for the mated and wedded in life.

They had heard the call of the child, and it was irresistible.

So, upon a bright morning in May, 18—, without confiding in any of their dearest friends, they silently drove out of the little town in the direction of W., located about 20 miles away, upon the banks of the beautiful Hudson. To those who have seen this unsurpassable location, with its huge and more than picturesque bluffs, majestically towering over the river, far below, where is to be had an uninterrupted view of the winding stream, for miles, it can never be forgotten. And, when nature has touched it with the luxuriance of vegetation of advanced spring—with its wide spreading and densely foliaged trees—and with the sunshine and glow in its warmth for the season of growth, there is no more beautiful picture

presented in all that the State of New York affords, than that which is portrayed upon reaching the crest of the hill of this little city. It has always been the show place of that section of New York and it is questionable, indeed, if there is its counterpart to be easily found.

Our friends had reached the top of the hill in the afternoon of this day, overlooking the little city, and had stopped for the time being, to let the faithful old horse rest. Around them they could see and were enjoying their beautiful surroundings. As his good wife sat by his side, charmed with all they beheld, John pointed in the distance to a very large building, located quite a distance from the highway, saying to her:

"Mary, that is the Home."

And, indeed, it was the Home. It was the great and magnificent edifice and home of the thousands of fatherless children that find their way there through the kind hearts that hunt them out of the misery of poverty and neglect, which unkind fates had surrounded them with. Into this haven, the foundling and oprhan are brought in their innocence, in countless numbers, where the gentleness and kindness of love that founded the institution itself, refashion and mold their little lives into avenues for coming years. And as one looks with a contemplation of the good done, and beholds this more than charming picture, the heart of necessity must swell with pride and the tear come to any eye, as upon the great playground upon the gently sloping hillside, there can be seen

the playful little wards of the great state of New York, unmindful of care and at all times strangers to any of the saddened conditions that may have brought any of them there. Upon this receding lawn can be seen faces and heard voices that are evidences of the great smile of charity that installed them there. And, surely as the spectator beholds them, he is convinced that here, indeed, 'The child is the father of the man." Bright faced and lusty lunged, what care these little tots? There can be seen the orphan, the child of misfortune, the deserted and castaway, as they all play away the day with its sunshine, complete masters and mistresses of misfortune's overcoming. Their little hearts and faces were the ruling tridents of power that called forth the noble impulses of sympathy of humanity's world.

And today, as we recall a half century in the great strides of modern civilization, and realize how swiftly the accomplishments of reform have supplanted the old, with the newer and more advanced ideas of benefaction, how hopelessly overcome must be every form of pessimism that denies the world is growing better! At the time of which the author writes there were only a few of our Nation's states that extended legalized charities. The public institutions of that time were only a few institutions of learning—and fewer of charity. The recognized public endeavor was concentrated in the jail, the asylum and poorhouse—each being hideous as the other with mismanagement and the necessity of their creation. The taxing power was an instrumentality of

corrective oppression. Energy of government sought punishment as the means of relief, and millions were spent in that direction, to hold the prisoner, and *nothing* to prevent his criminality and his created condition. Certain religious societies and organizations, here and there, established charitable institutions, somewhat comprehensive in character, and many of endowment gave to the country the nucleus from which the afflicted and unfortunate secured succor. But so far as concerned the state, there was no effort at amelioration. The urchin of the street, the parentless child, was unmolested and permitted to take his rank with the weeds of humanity. But now as the American casually scans and views any part of his country, he beholds, not alone, the supposed eccentricities of individual charity,—the benevolent and religious organizations dispensing it,—but he finds the strong arm of the law in its great operative power reaching into every section, however remote, establishing and maintaining not only universities of learning in its varied forms—but everywhere the spirit of prevention. Not simply the jail, but the school in competition. Not simply houses of correction, but houses of protection. Homes for the aged and crippled, asylums for the blind,—orphanages and foundling institutions and homes for every form of misery, may now be found everywhere with millions for their support by means of the taxing power.

The rescue of the child has become the source of greatest legislative and judicial activity and concern,

within the last quarter of a century. The reader must marvel at the accomplishments of adoption throughout the land as one of the incidents of the charity of the state, when it is learned that intelligent search is so constantly made by the law for homes for the waifs of the land. And, too, he must stand in greatest admiration, when he realizes the magnificence of effort in that behalf.

It was such an institution, to which John Andrews and his wife had gone, as our story begins. They were endeavoring to supply that which their lives lacked, by seeking some object upon which to lavish the pent up affections that time had stored in their kindly hearts.

They now followed the long and winding driveway leading to the main building. Upon each side of them were upturned faces and interested eyes of hundreds of little wards. Some, with timidity, approached with apparent shyness; while some, bolder than others, ran toward them. Now and then some mischievous and unafraid boy would call out to them as they proceeded, his cries being succeeded with a great chorus of laughter at the youthful banter. But with all of them, there was innocence and happiness.

After the visitors had been ushered into the office of the management and their registration and application for adoption had been entered, they were shown over the building and finally conducted to the great lawn where the little tots of humanity were at play. It happened to be the close of the school day

and a very large number could, therefore, be seen there. Subject to approval and official sanction, a selection was permitted, as is customary. They were undecided as to choice, as to whether boy or girl should be selected, but John, however, had conceded this right to his wife.

They had walked through avenues of youngsters and were standing in conversation with the attendant. While here, a little, dark haired and eyed girl of about four years of age, came running up to Mrs. Andrews and, playfully catching hold of her dress, at once attracted her attention. As she looked down into the innocent countenance of the child, Mary reached down and took her into her arms. It was but a short time until the velvety touhces of little hands made themselves felt in the tenderness of their caresses. The little hugs as it nestled her little round face against Mary's, met the motherly response. Mary sat down upon a bench, near by, with her captive in her arms. She remained so seated while John and the attendant continued their walk, being followed by the very large army of youngsters. They were gone only a few minutes. Upon their return, the little child had fallen asleep in her arms and she was looking intently into the little face, evidencing the peace of its slumber. As they reached her, John could easily discern the change in his wife's countenance. Transition had taken place. There was a beaming love he had never seen there before. Her eyes were slightly bedimmed with tears that told the story.

"John," she said, "this is my little girl. She is my choice for our daughter."

And so it was. The silent love of the cry for motherhood now had its way. The heart had quickened into early affection for both the woman and child. The little hands had won a conquest of baby love and John Andrews and his wife, Mary, had found the object of their search.

It was necessary that the petition for legal adoption should be passed upon by a court of competent jurisdiction at the county seat of the county, before the law was complied with; and there were several days of delay intervening before the child could be turned over to the newly found parents. But after all legal requirements had been complied with by the court, nothing remained to be done but bestow the name upon the little girl, which the court did in a most kindly way by saying:

"Well, since you leave it to me, I will give her the name of my little daughter, and we will call her:

"MILDRED ANDREWS."

## CHAPTER II.

### THE NEW HOME

UPON the return of John and Mary to M—— with little Mildred, she very soon had been installed with all the honors and graces of mistress of her new home. Her advent not only came as a great surprise to their neighbors and friends, but she equally became, at once, the much made of and talked of acquisition to the town. Those who knew them intimately could consistently prophesy the happiness in store for both of the now fond parents.

As the days passed into weeks and months, their love very naturally grew until they found the attachment so strong, and so much of happiness was beginning to be evident, that they each frequently wondered to the other that they had not taken the same step long before. They had easily and early begun that labor of love that comes to parentage, of planning for the child's future. Their ambition in that direction became the all absorbing topic of conversation between them. John had now disposed of his entire business interests in M——, and they were the possessors of no property aside from their savings and some considerable securities and their home.

With more than commendable wish that Mildred should never know the story of her parentage, both had cautioned, though unnecessarily, their neighbors,

with a view of secrecy being maintained upon that question. Yet, with their ever increasing affection for little Mildred, after much quiet discussion, it was determined that the best and surest safeguard for that purpose would be the selection of a new home, where with greater security from the child ever learning the truth, they could let her grow into womanhood. It was a most trying ordeal and sacrifice for them to make. Their entire married life had been spent there, and, as near as could be, it had been a real home to them. To sever the ties of friendship that had taken years to create, was no small task. They each knew that many a heart ache, as well as tears, would result upon their part—and knew, too, that the sincerest regrets would be experienced by their old friends upon the occasion of their leave taking. But, in their hearts, the spark was now glowing and growing into considerate love for Mildred and they determined upon leaving M——.

When John Andrews and his wife sought a new home, after leaving the good state of New York, they finally settled upon C——, in the state of I——, as a choice of many, in which to live. C—— was, at that time, a beautiful little town of about 3000 inhabitants, located on one of the state's largest railway lines. Its chief recommendation was found in the fact that it was known as a university town, it being the home of the W—— University, which is located there. A more attractive little city in which to live could not be found throughout the state. Noted for its many beautiful homes, its wide, well

paved and shaded streets and driveways, it never failed to please the stranger who might have been in search of all the pleasant environments that may be required for the home. The inhabitants consisted very largely of either wealthy business men or of those who had become citizens for the purpose of taking advantage of the educational advantages offered by reason of it being the seat of learning it had become.

The refined citizenship it contained, with the commendably high standards held up in a social way (doubtless the result of the influences of the institution of learning itself), had long ago made it well and favorably known among all of the state's municipalities. No such thing as a saloon had ever been known within its borders. It therefore, very naturally, had become and was a town where the law was supreme and violations of it were few in number. Its claims were exceedingly pretentious along these lines, and in the main somewhat justifiably so.

Of necessity, more than 1200 students each year attending the university, it became a town of boarding houses, liberally patronized. These institutions, while thriving during the scholastic year, were correspondingly devoid of patronage during the vacation period. When the student came, with the beginning of each fall term, and the boarding houses were filled, he became an important factor of the little town in many ways. He became at once a most material contributor to the prosperity of the town by reason of the money he spent, and signally, too,

he added to the liveliness of the population as well as increasing it. Then, too, he became a most interesting element, as well as the greatest annoyance to the small police force maintained. When once upon the rampage, as is true of all small college towns, there was no controlling him. Numerically so strong, they often tantalizingly became sources of pleasing nuisances with their increasing pranks and outbursts of deviltry. It was not infrequently the case that riots occurred, necessitating the aid of citizens in order that they should be suppressed. On many occasions, however, it would have required many companies of the state militia to have overawed or subdued them. For the most part, however, their pranks were harmless. They made life a great burden for the postmaster, it is true. On different occasions they would mischievously march in a body to the little post-office, and one after another approach the window and brutally ask: "Anything for ME?" But upon the whole, with the exceptions of the postmaster and the poor town marshal, the students were generally liked by the townsfolk and were welcomed when they came, and their departure equally regretted, for with the coming of vacation there also came the intense dullness of the summer months.

John Andrews had bought a home there upon first moving to the town, upon one of the principal residential streets, and together with his wife and little Mildred began a life of pleasing contentment among newly found friends.

It was not long after their advent to the place that

John, unusued to a life of idleness, found himself back in business again, and giving himself over to the cares of the merchant, as formerly. He had bought out one of the largest grocery stores of the town, and at once became active in its management.

Nor was it long until his sterling qualities as a man made for him the name of a most highly respectable citizen among those who knew him. And it was equally to be said and was true of his wife, that she was just as successful in making a similarly good impression upon her acquaintances. She had entered actively into church work, as she had always done, and had become one of the important members of the Presbyterian church of C——.

It was here that their little child began her life that her parents commenced to so jealously guard. With her decided infancy upon coming, she was unable, as she grew up, to remember anything as to where her parents formerly lived, and she was permitted to remain in ignorance throughout her life as to her relationship and home.

As the years came and went, she became an apt pupil in her youthful school work and in finding a most permanent and warm place in the hearts of her parents. Early, her mother began the needed lessons of training that followed her into her after life. If they were considerate and tender in their affections for her, there was formed a reflection in the response of the sweet faced child in her obedience and love which she manifested for them.

With no particularly great precocity shown, as the

years came, yet her mentality was at once recognized by those with whom she came in contact. At the age of ten she had shown a most marked interest in music, the tendency in that direction being properly cared for by her parents. But though early indicating a fondness for music, she became a studious girl in all other respects, so that when she reached the age of fourteen she was permitted to enter, upon qualifications shown, the university.

With her youthful acquaintances she was justly popular. Though possessed of sufficient pride as a girl, she made friends easily. Her kindliness of disposition appealed always to her school mates and friends. As a child she had been taught to be generous and it grew upon her instead of disappearing. With remarkably good health, in both mind and body, she was of a most cheerful disposition, fond of enjoyments and indulging in girlish amusements that were natural to one of her years.

Her father had provided her with a reliable and gentle saddle horse, and she had become a graceful rider. She very much admired her horse, and spent much time upon the delightful roads of the community. Devoted, too, to her dog, "Joy," the trio could be frequently seen upon the roads and streets as they would go and come from her beautiful home. Everything her heart could desire was had without even the asking by her. Without unduly humoring her, she was supplied with all the things her station and environments called for. Happy in disposition, her very presence was a great charm to her parents.

Often going to her father's store and waiting for him in order to drive him home, or to walk with him at the close of the business day, she became a familiar figure to and was well known by many of the citizens of the town. As she would be seen catching hold of his hand, swinging affectionately and playfully as she accompanied him, it was a pleasing picture to others and served to add to the great affection the good man had for her.

He thought she could speak the word 'Father" in a dearer way than any other lips ever could have pronounced it, and when the soft voiced girl said 'Mother," that there was an added love to all that the significance of the word could convey. With her never failing to manifest for both of them her affection, Mildred had early filled the voids in their hearts that had prompted their adoption of her. With her arms around both of them as they would stand or walk, when seen at their home or upon the street, and particularly as they would attend services on the Sabbath day, there was a picture delightful to behold, when would be reflected all the intense pride and love they had for her.

Soon Mildred had reached the age when she had ceased to any longer appear in short dresses, and when she had donned attire that bespoke her rapid advancement into young womanhood. She was no longer permitted to appear upon her horse now, unless with the long riding habit which she had so promptly declared to be a bothersome nuisance. Time and good health had added to the beauty and

charm of her young womanhood, and she had become the object of much admiration.

At the age of eighteen, so industriously had she applied herself, with her naturally studious inclinations, she became a graduate of the university, with well earned and deserved honors as a member of her class. And the esteem of the institution and its faculty had been won by her by reason of not only her successful achievements and accomplishments with which she was graced, but also of the lasting impression she had made with the purity of a womanhood so worthy of admiration.

There are doubtless very many, indeed, who now live who remember Mildred Andrews in all her charm of beauty as she was crowned and hailed as the May day queen by the more than 1000 students of the university, and who also remember a few months afterward as she appeared on the rostrum on the day of her graduation, as she received her diploma, and as she sat behind the great bank of flowers that surrounded her. No woman could have been more beautiful. With a little more than an average height, erect in figure, with dark and naturally wavy hair, with the large eyes that beamed with intelligence in all their beauty, a complexion that came solely from good health, and with a carriage as she walked that was most queenly, she was a magnificent picture of perfect beauty. On that day, as afterwards, she was the cynosure of all eyes—the greatest of God's creations,—a good and radiantly beautiful woman.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE SUNSHINE OF YOUTH

MILDRED and her mother had pleasantly spent the summer months in touring the Pacific coast, and had returned to C. after their long journey, with added good health, as well as having enjoyed the captivating varieties of both the scenery and climate their trip had afforded. It was, of course, her first opportunity to get in touch with the magnificence of her own country, and in open-eyed wonder she marveled at all she had seen. The effect upon her, as properly it should have been, was most pronounced. She wondered that the American could so eagerly betake himself away from his own country when there is so much to be seen and learned in his own. Whether, far up the mountain side or upon its greatest heights, now and then in contact with snow in mid-summer, or whether in the flowered kingdom of beautiful California, or upon the inviting waves of the peaceful Pacific, during that time of the year, her splendid mind endeavored to comprehend all that she had seen. Essentially a lover of the beautiful, and especially that which emanated from nature, her enthusiasm never abated at any time in all of her trip, when there was anything of

interest to be seen. It made little difference whether it was a mountain climb upon the back of a burro or on foot, she was always ready to actively follow the guide, and this was equally true when she had taken a long ride upon the back of one of the noted Western bronchos about which she had heard so much. With her mother comfortably stowed away at some resort, while she would take some of these various trips, she thoroughly enjoyed herself through the three months of their tour. It was therefore a most enthusiastic Mildred who had returned with her mother in the middle of September, in her unstinted praise of the great West.

But delightful as had been her vacation she, with her mother, was more than glad to be welcomed home by her father.

Upon her return there was no monotony that in any sense entered into the life she led.

She at once and without any delay resumed her musical studies, both vocal and instrumental. She found time to interest herself in much of the charitable work that her mother was so actively engaged in and would often visit with the mother, when some errand of that nature was undertaken. Then, too, she found great enjoyment in visiting her father at the store. She began to receive the attention, too, of some of the young men of the town whom she had known, but always with the consent and sanction of her mother.

But of all her pleasures and the diversions to which she most readily yielded, was the long horse-

back ride which she daily took, when the weather would permit. There was scarcely a road in that section that she was a stranger to, and the acquaintanceship she had made with the country people, when on these jaunts, was such that she was very well known. Her father met many of her acquaintances from the country as they became customers at his store; and he had playfully charged Mildred with drumming up trade for him because of her penchant for extending her acquaintanceship.

Through Doctor Larkin, a former Kentuckian, John prepared a most agreeable surprise for Mildred, by having purchased a thoroughbred saddle-horse from one of the friends of the doctor. He was a coal black animal of not only splendid pedigree,but was a very beautiful horse. The great disappointment that Mildred experienced upon his arrival, was that she was not permitted to ride him at once. But he was only three years old and had never received the training under the saddle that was necessary for him to be ridden. It could easily be seen that the horse was a very spirited animal—so much so that her father had some misgivings on the subject as to Mildred ever riding him. But a competent horse trainer was secured, who at once began the task of subduing any capricious temperament he might have. The impatience with which Mildred awaited the day when she should ride him, seemed to her intolerable. She would daily visit the barn to see the horse and was making great effort to get on good terms with him. The trainer would ride him

frequently upon the streets and near passing trains and puffing engines and had found no difficulty in curbing him. On different occasions, Mildred had been permitted to mount him; but he was led by the attendant and carefully watched by him. Mildred had insisted that she could ride the horse, but her father had demurred and required still further time to elapse before he would give his permission.

One cool morning in October, after the man in charge of the horse had left the barn, the irresistible desire to ride the new horse overcame her dutifulness and deference to her father's wishes. So, without the knowledge of any one, she deliberately saddled "Raritan," as she had named him, and rode out into the street without any objection whatever on the part of the horse. At first, with some timidity, she exercised great caution to see that he did not get beyond her control. But as she took a roundabout way to one of her favorite roads, into the country, she was delighted at his gentleness. Getting upon the public road, she gained in confidence to such an extent that she had urged him into a canter. As she rode further, the combined pleasure that she found in the fact of his good behavior and his easy, graceful stride, afforded her intense satisfaction. She lost all fear and rode with the same ease and confidence as if mounted upon her old standby.

She rode to the creek, where she had been so long accustomed to ride to water, and after letting the horse drink, turned and rode back toward town. She met many vehicles of various kinds, and even

passed near a moving train, but there was not the slightest indication of unruliness.

Becoming more and more encouraged, she resolved boldly to ride through the business part of town and call upon her father, and proudly show him how easily she could ride him. And so, following the bent of her inclination, she commenced an easy gallop through the outskirts and into the business section. She had proceeded down the street and was near the corner of the public square. Here her dream of "Raritan's" trustworthiness was shattered. A brightly colored threshing machine separator had been left standing near the park fence, and as the horse was being ridden toward it he began suddenly to shy and then swerve from it. At first, Mildred was inclined to change her course and avoid the cause of his fright. But she changed her mind and attempted to urge an approach to the piece of machinery; but the horse refused to go nearer. After repeated efforts, she involuntarily touched him with her whip. Almost instantly he reared with her. She now struck him again—this time, intentionally. This was seemingly too much for the horse, and he viciously plunged and reared time after time. By this time many persons, seeing what they deemed the peril of Mildred, ran toward her with the view of going to her rescue. But she waved them back, telling them she would control the horse. But at a time when it seemed that he was doing his utmost to throw her, by reason of his unruly rearing and plunging, a tall, athletic young man suddenly darted from the crowd that had col-

lected and ran to the horse. With considerable energy and effort he had succeeded in catching hold of the bridle rein. He had no sooner done so than Mildred called to him to let go. He refused to do so, whereupon Mildred said:

"I beg you to turn my horse loose. I can manage him."

Looking into her face, the young man replied:

"I fear you cannot."

Mildred somewhat incensed at his insistently holding on to the rein, now said with some show of feeling:

"I wish that you would turn loose of my horse's bridle."

But he did not at once do so.

Seeing his refusal, the high spirited girl struck him across his hand with her whip, with much force and severity. Without further ado, the young and would be gallant rescuer surrendered his hold upon the bridle rein and stepped away. The horse now became more unruly than ever and continued his misconduct with renewed vigor. Time after time did the splendid horse-woman lash him with her whip. Notwithstanding the efforts of the horse to throw her, she sat him with the tenacity and skill of an adept. The efforts of the horse began to lessen; but the whip continued to be applied by the fearless woman, and in a short time, amid the cheers of the crowd, he was finally conquered and Mildred boldly rode him up to the cause of his fright. Afterwards, she turned the horse's head

toward Main Street, and the now thoroughly subdued animal walked up the street with the docility of her dog, "Joy."

As she did so, another rousing cheer was given her, which was joined in by the young man with a very red streaked scar across his hand.

Mildred was unaware of it, but her father had come upon the scene just as she had started home. He had seen but little of the incident, but had it told to him many times by the spectators.

When he learned of the treatment which the tender of the young man's services had met with, Mildred's father had sought for him and offered due apologies for her conduct. The young man laughingly said, however:

"Oh, my dear sir, no excuses are necessary. She whipped and conquered us both with the same whip. Assure the young lady for me that I am just as humble as her horse."

When John reached home that evening, he could see no evidence of the imperiousness of will power that had attracted such attention to Mildred. On the contrary, he found a most nervously penitent and red-eyed girl awaiting him. No sooner had he reached the library upon his return, than Mildred came running to him, and throwing her arms around his neck, commenced with tears and broken sentences to tell him how regretfully sorrowful she was that she had so misbehaved. And though her tears were plentiful, she managed to say:

"I know that I ought not to have disobeyed you,

father. But I just knew I could ride the horse, and I coud not resist the temptation. But you will forgive Mildred, won't you, father?"

"O yes, my child. But I do not see how I am to be able to pay the damages I am afraid that young man will ask for his injuries," replied the father in a most humorous assumption of seriousness.

"But, father," she answered, "he deserved it. I told him to let go, and he stubbornly refused. Yet, I am awfully sorry, anyhow, father. Won't you find out who he is and apologize for me? I know he must think that I am a most cruel hearted vixen."

When told by her father that he had already seen the young man, and upon being told the good natured remark that the victim had made, Mildred felt very much improved in spirit. She even remarked in the best of good humor:

"And just to think! He was so very handsome, too! What was his name, father?"

"He gave me the name of Paul Hanley," her father replied. "He was not known by any one, and was evidently a stranger to the town."

When Mildred went to bed that night, there were two very strongly debatable questions presenting themselves to her mind that remained unsettled as she sank into healthful slumber. She did not know whether she rejoiced most at her being able to conquer the horse, or as to whether she more keenly regretted her cruelty to the handsome stranger.

## CHAPTER IV.

### DOCTOR LARKIN'S PATIENT

AT the breakfast table, very naturally, a topic of discussion and interest was the incident of the day before. And, too, there arose the question as to whether Mildred should continue to ride "Raritan." After some discussion, the undisputed subjugation of the horse so convinced her father of her ability to ride him, that he reluctantly consented, though it required numerous healthy hugs and as many kisses to win him over.

From that time on she experienced no further trouble with the horse, and the two seemed to form a friendship that was a permanent one and which resulted in a great deal of pleasure to her.

One day not long afterward, when Mildred was taking one of her enjoyable rides upon "Raritan" upon a country road, she was returning home and had stopped at a little house for the purpose of getting a drink of water. A little boy of about eight years of age was sitting in front of the steps of the house and had brought her a glass of water, at her request. She noticed that the little fellow walked, or rather hobbled, with great difficulty, and she could see that one of his legs seemed to be turned inward in such a manner that he was very badly crippled.

"How did you get yourself so badly hurt, little man?" kindly asked Mildred.

"I fell off the fence when I was about four years old," the boy replied.

"Well, did you have a doctor?" she asked him.

"Yes'm, but ma said he didn't know his business and he didn't know how to 'tend to my leg, and ma ain't never had the money to get no other doctor," the child replied.

Mildred had alighted from her horse and continued to talk to the youngster about his injured limb. Among other things she learned that the boy's father had died when he was a babe and that his mother was compelled to work by the day in order to make a living for herself and child.

Upon remounting her horse, after waving the boy a cheerful goodbye, she galloped away.

In less than an hour she was at the office of Doctor Larkin, her father's physician. She was a great favorite with the kind hearted doctor and was greeted most cordially by him.

"Now, what in the world brings you here? Do you want me to go to see that young fellow you horsewhipped the other day?" he asked as he motioned her to a seat.

"Now, see here, Doctor, I am awfully sorry that I lost my temper and misbehaved as I did, but it was all because of that dreadfully wild horse you brought over from Kentucky for father, and so, I think, you are half way to blame; and I want you to remember never to chide me again.

"But, Doctor, I want you to go out on the Hiller Road, about three miles, with me, and look at a deformed child, and tell me if you can do anything for him," she replied to the doctor, and then continued to explain the boy's affliction as best she could.

"Well, Mildred, I am at your service, and if you will ride out home, I will come by, by the time you have put up your horse. Let me ask of you, however, that you leave that riding whip at home," said the doctor as he jocularly spoke to her.

A few minutes afterward the aged doctor and youthful girl were on their way to see the patient, consuming much of the trip in good natured quarrels without cessation, until they reached the home of the boy, who was very much surprised at seeing Mildred again. The doctor at once, tenderly and carefully, made a thorough examination of the boy's left leg and his condition generally, with a great degree of seriousness. When he had finished and they were about to leave, he slyly left a dollar in the little fellow's hand, as he shook hands with and was telling him goodby, not knowing that Mildred had observed him. On the way to town, upon being asked whether he could do anything for his patient, he replied by saying:

"I think I can, Mildred, but I would much rather perform an operation upon the doctor that attempted to set that boy's leg. Of course, the ethics of my profession would forbid my criticism of any other member of it, but if that long-eared specimen were here I might be induced to express an opinion of his

ability, but you know the dignity of my calling makes me very careful and guarded in all that I say," said the doctor, as he with mock seriousness, shielded the absent medico.

"And, Doctor, what would it cost for the boy to receive the attention necessary for his recovery?" she asked of him.

"Oh, about one hundred dollars," he answered, with a smile, as he seemed to pleasantly think of something else on his mind at the time.

"Very well, I want you to take charge of him right away and do all you can for him," said Mildred.

And so it was settled that Jimmy Parsons should be brought to the doctor's private hospital, when the mother should consent.

When the doctor drove back to town, he put Mildred out in front of her father's store, as she requested.

As she went in, she immediately hastened to her father's desk, where she found him engaged in conversation with a man whose back was turned to her. She had politely stepped away when she saw that her father was busy. But as she did so, her father, with a smile upon his face, at once called to her, saying:

"Come here, Mildred; I want you to meet a friend of mine."

As she started toward him the gentleman turned and faced her.

To her amazement and great embarrassment, she saw her would be rescuer.

"Mr. Hanley," said her father, "I wish to present my daughter, Mildred, whom I believe you have met before."

Acknowledging his pleasure at meeting her, the blush had come to the beautiful girl's cheeks, and he instantly wished that she might strike him over the other hand.

Mildred, partially recovering her composure, now said to him:

"Mr. Hanley, you can never know how sorry I have been since that day for my rudeness to you, to say nothing of my downright cruelty. I know that you must have formed a dreadful opinion of my fiendishness in striking you, and I fear that you can never forgive me for it."

"Miss Andrews, I assure you that I got greater enjoyment out of the occasion than any one, not even excepting yourself. To have witnessed you conquer and at the same time to have witnessed your superb skill in doing so afforded me great pleasure. But as to my ever forgiving you for what you did to me with that whip—well, I shall be compelled to take the matter under advisement, and in the meantime I shall put you under a species of strict probation," laughingly replied Mr. Hanley.

Afterwards, they stood talking for a short time, during which Mildred's confusion disappeared as the conversation progressed.

While the trio were together, Mildred suddenly turned to her father, saying:

"Father, I have two favors that I want to ask of you."

"Granted," said her father, "in advance. Now may I ask what they are?"

"Yes, father," she smilingly said.

"First, I want you to give me $100.00, and my second request is that you do not ask what I may do with the money."

Her father at once turned to his safe and promptly handed her a roll of bills.

"You see, she holds the whip hand over me too, Mr. Hanley," smilingly, he said, as he affectionately put his arm around Mildred. "By the way, Mildred," he continued, "if you are going home right away, I wish you would take this package to your mother which she desires for the table."

As she took the bundle from her father, she reached over to him and kissed him, and then turned to leave the store. But before doing so, she turned to Mr. Hanley and said:

"Mr. Hanley, I am very much pleased to have met you."

"But may I not walk home with you?" he politely asked, and then added. "It might be that I can more justly consider the extent of the term of your probation, if you should so allow."

Upon her assenting, they left the store and she was escorted home by him. On the way, Mildred learned that Mr. Hanley and his mother were preparing to move to C. in a short time, with a view

of permanently locating there. She found in her companion a most agreeable young man and enjoyed the short walk they had taken. When they reached the gate, permission being given for him to call upon her, they separated with the usual exchange of courtesies incident to a first meeting.

Before she slept that night, Mildred convinced herself, that there were two things she was really glad of. She was glad that she was going to save Jimmy Parsons' leg, and she was glad that she had struck Paul Hanley across the hand with her whip.

Bright and early the next morning, Mildred was at the office of Dr. Larkin. The negro servant had not yet finished dusting the office furniture when she appeared, but she had heard the voice of the doctor long before she reached the door of his office, as he was talking to his servant.

"No, that's just the way of it. There never was a nigger that crossed the Ohio River but that he became no account the moment he got on this side. Now, here you are, telling me that you curried "Joe" and rubbed him down. Why, that horse almost told me as he turned his head and looked at himself that you hadn't touched him and I——Why, good morning, Mildred," he said, as he saw her at the door. "What in the world brings you around here so early?" And without giving her an opportunity to reply, he continued:

"I was just talking to my first assistant here, and was just about to tell him what a blunder Abe Lincoln made when he made the niggers up here better

than a white man, when you came in. Come on in, Mildred, and let that dust settle."

Mildred's mission was to slip $100.00 into his hand, which she soon did, for her little crippled friend.

"Now, look here, my girl, that is carrying things too far. I was only joking about charging for that little fellow. Why, I'd put two brand new legs on him if you wanted me to," and the good man felt that kindly toward the girl.

"But, now doctor, if you don't take this money I will never speak to you again. You do too much work without pay, anyway," and saying as much, she tripped lightly down the steps, leaving the doctor standing at his door.

After she had gone the doctor said:

"Ike, don't you know that girl is an angel?"

"Yasser, boss, I'se done heerd dat befo'," said the darkey.

"Now, who in thunder did you ever hear say that?" asked the doctor.

"I can't zactly 'member, boss, but I think I have heerd you say it a few times," grinned the darkey as he dodged the feather duster.

The operation upon Jimmy Parsons was completely successful, and several weeks afterward, the doctor drove up to the home of widow Parsons with the boy in his buggy. The mother came to the buggy and taking him in her arms, and seeing when she placed him upon the ground that there was no evidence of his past injury, and that he could walk with-

out difficulty, burst into tears of greatest joy and gratitude, which the noble hearted doctor, sitting in his buggy, saw with a beaming eye and smile of satisfaction. The good woman had more than compensated him for all that he had done. As she strove to make known by words her apprecation, he simply said to her:

"No, madam, you need not thank me. Thank that girl that brought your boy to me. By the way, there is a little present that I want to make for Jim. Take it and let the little rascal go to school. What he needs now is to commence wrestling with the 'blue back' speller. But I want you to distinctly understand that no one must know that I have given you this."

And he handed the proud mother the fee of one hundred dollars that Mildred had given him.

With these words, after bidding Jim a cheery goodbye, the old doctor turned his horse toward town and drove away humming the only tune he ever knew, the first lines of the song being: "The sun shines bright on the old——"

With the modernization of the profession that so largely has made it a means merely of livelihood, there may be a few men of the type of Dr. Larkin left, but not many.

## CHAPTER V.

### MILDRED'S NEW ACQUAINTANCE

PAUL HANLEY'S father had died, leaving his mother and Paul an estate of considerable value, some two or three years before his advent into this story, among other things bequeathing to him a large interest in a successful wholesale grocery business located in St. Louis. They had remained at their former home at B. since the death of his father, Paul now and then making trips throughout the time after becoming of age, in the interest of his house in a territory assigned to him in the southern part of the state. There was another son, Edwin, who at this time was away from home attending college.

Paul Hanley had received a collegiate education during the life of his father, and was now a young man of about twenty-three years of age. Tall and with the build of an athlete, and, in fact, being one, handsome to the extent that one would turn and look at him the second time, always a neat dresser, he never failed to pass muster with his pleasing and attractive appearance.

He had led a clean and somewhat exemplary life,

being given to no extent to any of the average vices that naturally beset the young man of this age. Above all, he was a most dutiful and affectionate son and was idolized by his mother.

Since his father's death he spent as much time as possible with her, and was all his mother's heart could desire as a son.

Not by any means was he considered perfect, but rather above the average, in manner, character, refinement and education.

Upon coming to C. with his mother, he very naturally was a most interesting addition to its citizenship in several ways. He became a well liked and popular man with his gentlemen acquaintances and was very much admired by the other sex.

In so small a town as C. he was not long in rapidly becoming acquainted with the people in a general way.

He had within a very short time become a somewhat frequent visitor at the Andrews' home, and the friendship that had arisen between Mildred and himself became most noticeable. There was no doubting that their acquaintanceship had grown into a mutually high regard they bore for each other.

During the first month or so conventional requirements had made him somewhat formal in his attention to Mildred, but as time wore on he felt himself privileged to dispense with all formality and come and go at any reasonable time as a guest at the Andrews home.

Frequently seen in public together on the occasion

of public gatherings and upon the street, the handsome couple elicited a most universal admiration upon the part of those who saw them.

During the winter months of that year he had on several occasions, been called away upon business for several weeks, but he had lost no time in making his appearance at Mildred's home upon his return. When away, he never lost an opportunity to manifest his regard for her by some of the many courtesies so appreciated by a woman. Some times he would send her some popular book, perhaps a box of choice cut flowers or some token of his friendship and regard that even a friendship alone will license and sanction.

Once, when away, it was on his return to C. after an absence of several weeks that he had gone to Mildred's home and learned that she had been accompanied to a theatre by Frank Clements, a young merchant of C. He had remained for some time, as her parents were really very fond of him.

He was entertaining in conversation and he never failed to have some pleasantry as to some happened incident while he was upon the road for his house. Despite his effort, however, to conceal it, his disappointment at not seeing Mildred was plainly observed by the mother, who assured him that Mildred would be sorry that she was not at home when he called. He expressed his own regret with great sincerity.

After he had gone most significant glances were exchanged between John and his wife.

"John," said his wife, "do you know that Mr.

Hanley and our little girl are making rapid progress in their friendship for each other?"

"Well," yawned John, "no greater than you and I did, Mary," and with that he patted her on the cheek with gentleness and affection.

"Personally," he continued, "I like Hanley and think that he is an exceptionally fine young man."

"But, John, it would break my heart if we should lose Mildred," she replied.

"Oh, well, we will have it understood that whoever marries her marries the whole family," jokingly replied he, and then continued: "You need not worry. I do not think we are in danger of losing her; I think that Hanley and she have merely become friends and nothing more; but why worry, if there arose a greater attachment?"

It was quite evident to his wife that he was an admirer of Mr. Hanley, and so for the time being there was nothing further said.

When her mother informed her the next morning at breakfast that Mr. Hanley had called, she scrutinizingly scanned her daughter's face to see what effect it would have.

But without betraying any undue interest, she had merely replied:

"Well, I am sorry that I did not get to see him—

"Mother, I had a most delightful evening with Frank. I think so much of him. He is such good company and so courteously attentive that one is bound to like him. We went to the theatre and afterwards to Hewitt's Oyster Parlor. I am going

with him to see "Pinafore" next Tuesday. Oh, he is such a dear."

If she had intended disarming her mother, she had succeeded.

Mr. Hanley came the next evening.

Upon being seated in the parlor, Mildred said to him:

"I was so sorry that I was away from home last evening, Mr. Hanley."

"Yes, Miss Andrews, but you spent a most delightful evening, I do not doubt, and with company that I most certainly respect," he replied.

"I did indeed. Frank is such an entertainer, one must be hard to please who does not appreciate him. But tell me of yourself. You have been away so much of late that you are becoming quite a stranger," she replied.

"I have been away, but that did not prevent my often thinking of how delighted I would be to get back to my mother," he said with the same tone Mildred had used.

She looked with one quick glance and fancied she could see a trace of a faint smile as he spoke.

"Yes, I know she must be always glad to have you back. Being separated from those who are near and dear, whom one may love, is and must be the penalty of one's love, I would imagine. You see, I have never had the experience along that line, except when we were away from father during last summer, but I know how glad mother and I were to see him again," she said in a most casual way.

He had undertaken to make the conversation wholly impersonal as applied to them, and her reply had materially assisted him along that line.

During the evening she had entertained him with some of her music; and as he stood by her side turning the leaves of the music as she sang, listened to the sweet voiced girl with a silent admiration of both her voice and her great beauty. When she, smiling, turned from the piano stool, she had not been slow to note his intensity of look.

It was at a day when the phonograph was not employed to wheeze out its straining twang as the music of the parlor, nor had the player piano made its advent. As a result, young ladies were expected to draw upon the resources of their abilities as musicians in order to furnish entertainment. Doubtless, these remarkable inventions may have to some extent accounted for what is said to be a lessening of individual effort as musicians.

But be that as it may, one might have some difficulty, whose love making was at that time, in getting in touch with the methods of the now, the stage setting of which is not complete unless with the phonograph that sings its own love songs to the young man while the girl may leisurely watch the effect upon the caller. Then, too, the old timer, whose love making antedates the new invention, might, however, regret that he could not have danced with his girl in her parlor as the player piano or phonograph furnished the music. Yet, in view of every day observations, it may be confessed that these innovations have not

had any appreciable effect in either checking or at all lessening the progress of love's warfare.

As these two young people sat throughout the evenings, engaged in attempts to entertain each other, there were no beaten pathways which they could follow, for every friendship and every love must blaze and pave its own pathway—some smooth and others rough and rocky; some strewn with roses as boundaries, while others are bordered with the thorns and rocks of life.

Paul knew that he was falling in love with Mildred. He had felt his admiration grow with most amazing rapidity. He knew, too, that his attentions had been received by Mildred with willingness upon her part. And yet he had never in anyway intimated that he bore more than a feeling of friendship for her.

He had with some ingenuity of mind attempted to learn the position he occupied in the esteem of Mildred. But in this he had failed utterly—Mildred's conduct and all she had ever said or done was only that which might easily have been the result of friendship.

It is almost an undisputed observation that nature has so equipped woman with that faculty known as "tact," that she can easily conceal her emotions and love for a man without difficulty. When man measures swords with a woman upon this question, he usually withdraws from the scene of the conflict with broken sword. Whether designed as an intuitive gift to her or not, yet it is true that she

may read his heart with that corresponding ease with which she successfully baffles him in his attempts to learn hers.

And it was true as to Paul and Mildred. She knew that he had purposely referred to his great pleasure of always getting home because of his mother. Though true to some extent, it was not wholly so.

She had purposely made mention of her inexperience as to ever being separated from any one she ever loved, or thought anything of, except her father, with the intention of warding off his efforts at penetration of her own armour.

As a matter of fact, she knew his mind and was concealing successfully her own from him.

During the time Paul remained at home, Mildred found herself by no means neglected. Paul became more and more attentive to her.

She had other admirers, who were frequent visitors and whose friendship she courted. She very cruelly, often and intentionally, mentioned her great pleasure in being with them to Paul, becoming somewhat profuse in her praise and of her regard for them.

Spring had now come. She was almost joyous in her anticipation of again enjoying her horseback rides, which the winter and early spring roads had made impossible. When expressing her longing to Paul in this regard, she was agreeably surprised when he informed her that he had made the purchase of a very fine horse, and incidentally, of course, announced that he would be able to accompany her.

She could scarcely suppress a smile, when he had so informed her. There was some humor afforded as she learned the news, as well as pleasure, with which she received this imparted information.

She knew that Paul had never ridden a horse before and was amused when he had commented upon the efficacy of riding as healthy exercise, especially when she considered the huge frame of the athlete standing before her with every evidence of the best health imaginable. What pleased her most was that the announcement was added evidence of his desire to be with her and his increasing regard for her.

One day, Mildred met Jimmy Parsons and his mother upon the street. Seeing the bright faced boy, walk without a limp beside his mother, gave her great pleasure. While talking to Mildred, the characteristics of the womanly tendency, of women to talk, (and so often in a confidential way), manifested itself in her telling Mildred as to the kindness of Doctor Larkin in giving Jimmy the $100.00. She cautioned Mildred as to secrecy, in relating the incident. The tears came to Mildred's eyes when she walked away.

"The cunning old hypocrite!" she said to herself. And so he had taken the money she had given him and had given it to Jimmy!

She immediately went to her father and related the incident to him.

They discussed the matter at length, after which they went to Ingersoll's jewelry store.

The next day Mildred hastily and surprisingly went up the stairway leading to Dr. Larkin's office and entered, where she found the old gentleman engaged in his usual avocation of quarreling with Ike.

On looking up and seeing her he commenced:

"I would certainly like to know, if I am going to be bothered with you again, with some more of that charity of yours. Oh, well," as he sighed as if much annoyed: "Politeness demands that I offer you a seat. So sit down as you are here, young lady. How are you and that young"—and he suddenly stopped as he looked into the face of Mildred.

Mildred remained standing, however,. As he looked at her, he could see displeasure in her countenance, as it seemed to him. And indeed Mildred was pretending very successfully.

"Doctor Larkin," she began, "I have always regarded you as a gentleman and I have tried to conduct myself always in a ladylike way toward you, and I have never hesitated in my friendship for you —I have never deceived you about anything!"

"Why my dear girl, what in the world is the matter?" he asked thoroughly aroused. "Ike you get out of here," he said as he turned to the faithful old servant who was his slave before the war.

"No, Ike will *not* get out of here. I want him to stay right here and hear what I propose saying to you," she replied as she feigned indignation.

"Doctor Larkin," she said, "you are a sly old hypocrite and I simply hate you. I gave you that

$100.00 for Jimmy Parsons, and after you had kept him for four weeks and had taken care of him, when you needed that money, and badly too, you slipped out to the boy's mother and gave it all to her." As she spoke she could scarcely contain herself, but by effort, maintained her composure.

"Well, now," the doctor began, "will you tell me the source of your information, my young Tartar?"

"Yes, Mrs. Parsons told me so, and you can't deny it," replied Mildred.

"Well you go get her and bring her up here and I'll perform an operation on that long tongue of hers. That's just the way it goes. A darned woman's tongue has got to work whether she does or not. Yes I——"

But he never got any further. The arms of his accuser were around his neck and he was being hugged and kissed by Mildred, greatly to his embarrassment and the great amusement of Ike, whose grin was becoming more and more expansive.

"Now you dear old friend! How could you do such a thing when you know that I know you could not afford to? Bless your dear old heart!" (and she hugged him some more.)

"God never made another man like you. Take this! Dear old friend, it is from your little Mildred. Read the inscription."

The old doctor's head had sunk down upon his breast and tears were rolling down his cheeks. Mildred with full heart turned to go and as she looked

from the doorway, she saw old Ike with his head bent and back turned.

In a few moments the doctor arose from his chair with the gold watch and chain in his hand, which Mildred had left. He opened the back and through blurred eyes, read:

"From Mildred."

Overcome with great emotion, he turned his tear stained face and saw Ike with his back turned and hands to his eyes. For once he dropped the brusque exterior he wore for Ike, and with a voice that trembled with all that he felt, kindly said to him:

"Ike—good old Ike—"he faltered, "that's the kind of women men die for."

## CHAPTER VI.

### A MOST ENJOYABLE RIDE

THE day now came when Paul accompanied Mildred over the Hiller Road upon the occasion of an agreed horse back ride. It was one of those beautiful May days when life is a delight and everything gives evidence of it. With flowers in bloom, trees once more green with shading foliage, a sunshine that gave glow and made vegetation crowd its way from the warm ground, the roadside fringed with green to the very edge of the traveled highway, it was a charm of influence that was felt by the two friends as they rode happily along.

Paul's horse was a dark bay thoroughly trained to the saddle, and gentle in every way. If he had been otherwise, there is no doubt but that Paul would cease to have mention in this story, except in saddened memory. His awkwardness in attempting to ride, was the source of much merriment to both of them. As long as he walked his horse, he felt perfectly secure, and imagined himself posing as an experienced horseman, but when his steed would start into a gallop induced by "Raritan," his dream

was, at once, ingloriously shattered. He would find himself leaning forward, in a most clumsy manner and when the horse would stop the gallop, often he would be on the verge of being pitched bodily over the horse's head. But though the merry laughter of Mildred rang in his ears, he took his discomfiture in a most good humored way and would bravely ride on.

They had ridden several miles and while attempting to cross a small ditch, Paul's horse made an unexpected movement and literally went across in a bound. This was too much for Paul's lack of skill and he was spilled in one large and undignified heap upon the opposite bank. Seeing him fall, Mildred had immediately alighted from her horse and had run to him as he was getting up.

"Paul,—I mean Mr. Hanley, are you hurt?" she asked.

He had risen to his feet. She had placed her hand upon his shoulder before he had arisen, and upon getting upon his feet, he reached up and taking hold of her hand, replied:

"Oh, no, I am not hurt, but my dear girl, my dignity has been very rudely overcome," as he laughed.

And in fact he was not injured. As they walked away from where he had fallen, he continued to hold her hand for some few feet, when Mildred withdrew it. Their horses had made no effort to go away, but were only a short distance ahead grazing upon the grass upon the roadside. They had entered

the forest some distance back and were now close to a small bridge over a creek nearby.

"Would you make so very much fun of me, if I asked that we rest awhile?" asked Paul.

"Why no," replied Mildred, "I know you must be tired. I know what it is for a new beginner to attempt a long ride. Certainly, we will hitch our horses for a time."

In a short time, the horses being secured by fastening the reins to the low accommodating limbs of a tree, they were soon seated upon the moss covered roots of a large beech tree upon the bank of the little stream.

While sitting there, they had each commented upon the beauty of the scene. They both seemed to feel the peaceful touch of nature's great endowments. They listened to and saw the singing birds, flitting happily from tree to tree. All around them was the real beauty of the forest. The gentle breeze that sighed itself through the rustling leaves of trees, the sunshine with its slanting rays radiating its golden light upon the dark shade of the beautiful foliage, the music of the rippling waters of the modest creek as it gently wound its graceful way—all bespoke the peacefulness, to which for the time, they were yielding themselves. No other sound was to be heard, except in the distance could be faintly heard the rumble of some farmer's wagon, the tinkle of the bells of grazing cattle and the call of some farm boy to lowing cattle upon the hillside.

For some time neither had spoken. They were

preparing themselves for the time when words prompted by their hearts would break the silence.

Mildred had slightly turned her head from Paul, as she was apparently looking away. He, now, no longer hesitated.

He reached over and gently placed his hand upon hers, and tenderly pressing it in his own, looked into the eyes and face of the silent woman. She, with cheeks suffused with the blushes of modesty and the purity of virgin womanhood, with the heaving of breast and hastened breathing, looked into his face and knowing that the time had come for its first unfolding, listened to the sweet, dear old story of love.

"Mildren, how I have longed for this moment! From the time that I first saw you and felt the sting and cut of that whip of yours, you aroused a strange feeling within me. I first told myself that it was merely an admiration for beauty and your daring. I attempted to dismiss you from my mind, but I could not do so. I found myself coming to C. under the pretense of business, when my business was only to get sight of you.

"My great desire to know you overwhelmed me. I frequently loafed around the vicinity of your father's store hoping to see you. Finally, one day, I was successful and I met you. I afterwards induced my mother to move here. I have waited for time to tell me the truth as to my heart. Dear girl, I never loved, nor told of a love, for any woman on earth, and now for the first time, I speak the words of my

dream. I love you, Mildred Andrews—I love you with all my heart. Speak to me, my dear girl, and tell me that I do not love in vain."

As he spoke and saw the emotion of the girl before him, he felt encouraged and offered to pull her to him. But she gently checked him by saying:

"Dear Paul, when I tell you that I never knew what a human love was until I met and have known you, God knows I speak the truth. I do love you, Paul! Take me, Paul. For I am all yours!"

Mildred finished by throwing herself into Paul's arms and with her head upon his breast looked into the soul of the handsome man with a love as pure as God could ever give.

Drawing her face to his, their lips met, lingering long in the ecstacy of their first—the dear sweet kiss of a strong heart and beautiful love. And thus he held her in his arms for the blissful moments of love's measured joys.

Awakening from their newly found and beautiful dream of happiness, they were surprised at the spectators interestedly looking on. Unheard by them two peaceful eyed cows had approached near them, as well as a lazy looking donkey. They were not standing close together, but they motionlessly stood and looked at the strange sight which for moments they had beheld.

Startled at first, the happy couple would not permit themselves to be denied the deep long drink at love's fountain.

When they finally began the return home, there

were two faces radiating with all the happiness human hearts can find and when they rode into town and to Mildred's home and she had alighted, Paul said to her:

"Mildred, my queen and sweet one, you have made me the happiest man on earth, and I shall tell your father and mother as much tonight."

"And dear Paul, you have made me an equally happy girl. How I love you, my sweet heart, my noble man!" she replied.

And then the ungraceful cavalier mounted his horse, with great difficulty and rode gaily home.

When Mildred went into the house, her face still aglow with all the happiness she felt, she immediately sought out her mother and after throwing her arms around her and affectionately kissing her, said to her:

"Oh mother, you do not know how happy your Mildred is!"

With one glance her mother thought she divined the source of her daughter's happiness, and she asked:

"Mildred have you something to tell your old mother?"

"Mother, yes, I have something to tell you," she replied. "It is something I have known for some time. Paul loves me and has told me so. And dear mother I love him. He has made me so happy that I cannot describe my heart to you."

And again the overjoyed girl resorted to embraces of her mother as a means of showing her great emotion.

"Oh, my dear Mildred," said her mother, "you have neither deceived nor disappointed your parents. Your father and I have not been slow to note how you and Mr. Hanley were being drawn to each other. We both think he is a good man and I know that your father will be pleased for your dear sake."

And as the mother spoke, her father entered the door.

"Mildred has something to say to you, father," said her mother. And so the news was broken to her father. He took Mildred into his arms and kissed her time and again. With eyes fast filling with tears, he looked into her face, saying nothing but letting his silence eloquently tell of his heart's love for her. Finally when he spoke he said:

"May the ever merciful God, bring happiness to my darling girl!" and seeing Mildred was beginning to be affected by the emotion he was showing, he continued, "Mildred I feel sure that you are giving your heart to a good man."

When Paul came that evening, he was welcomed with undisguised cordiality, if not affection by Mildred's parents. After the embarrassing moments of the first introduction of the subject, he was made to know that his love for Mildred was with their approval.

The hours the two lovers spent that evening became time's curtain, upon which they painted life's dream of happiness, and upon which were registered their hopes, and their plighted vows; to them they became a vast canvas, upon which love's hand drew

the picture of happiness, which in the after years, could be seen with memory's eye.

And in the latter part of June in the Presbyterian Church, Paul and Mildred in the presence of many friends were married. And as Paul, after the ceremony, walked down the aisle of the church, with Mildred as his bride, in all her fascinating beauty, his pride and his happiness were plainly discernible. And, then, when they descended the steps of the little church to the waiting carriage, they walked through lanes of well-wishing friends.

Before the carriage had started, however, Mildred had noticed particularly, two familiar faces, upon the outside of the church, that of Doctor Larkin and Jimmy Parsons. Jimmy ran to the carriage and holding in his hand a small bunch of flowers, thrust them into Mildred's hand just as the carriage rolled away.

The happy couple now drove directly to Mildred's home, where preparations were made for their departure upon a well planned tour. With their mothers and Mildred's father blessing them with their love, in a short time, they were soon driven to the station where they shortly boarded a train that bore them upon joy's journey, of several months.

## CHAPTER VII.

### REAL HAPPINESS.

HEN Paul and Mildred returned to C. in September, after a most eventfully happy sojourn, they were greeted on all sides by an earnest and sincere welcome. And it was a happy gathering at the Andrews home, after they had been welcomed with the love of their parents.

Mildred was one great ray of sunshine. Her happiness in the love of her wifehood for her husband was eloquently spoken and acted. And it was likewise true as to Paul. They had gone away and returned in the same frame of mind and with hearts measuring out their affection for each other without abatement. As they were entertained by many friends and as they appeared in public, the comment was universal as to the well mated couple's predicted happiness for the future.

On every hand there were smiles that greeted them. Indeed it was a most popular and heartily approved marriage. The little town had never been visited with a more talked of wedding. No more handsome couple was to be found and no two persons could have been better suited to each other than they.

As they rode down the street upon their horses, or in the carriage, they were always given the recognition of greatest friendliness, their acquaintances anxiously accorded them.

They spent much of the time at the large and elegantly beautiful home which was now nearly completed, it having been begun before the wedding. Paul had purchased a half block, not far from Mildred's parents, and was sparing no expense in the erection of a most magnificent structure far surpassing any of C. He was providing every possible modern convenience and luxury that money could procure. Mildred was more than delighted with it, and always with Paul, they together anxiously awaited its completion.

By the time that the structure received its finishing touches upon the part of the painters, experienced men had furnished it with costly elegance of appointment in keeping with so magnificent and pretentiously beautiful building.

The house set back from the street quite a distance and was surrounded by well grown shade trees, that gave added appearance of beauty.

It being before the days of experiment with the automobile were over, there was only provision for horses, in a commodious stable that Paul had permitted Mildred to superintend in its construction. She had taken a most active interest in this building which she had designed for "Raritan" and the other horses.

Finally, when every detail as to construction had

been carefully completed and their home was ready for occupancy, the newly weds moved in one day and began living the home life of love's dream.

One of the first things that Mildred saw as she sat down to their first meal in their new home, was a very official looking document under her plate, which turned out to be a deed to her to the beautiful place, as well as a conveyance of all of its contents from Paul.

As mistress over her new domain and surroundings, Mildred began to, and did preside in a manner charmingly dear to her husband, and gracefully toward the numerous friends she so frequently entertained.

Mildred, though never given to ostentation and never prone to lavishness, was yet delightfully graced as being a royal entertainer and her home often became the scene of many popular and thoroughly enjoyed gatherings.

In no sense, did the young wife permit herself to become ambitious in that direction. While she enjoyed being surrounded by her friends at her home, she avoided being regarded as wishing to be known as a society leader. Nor did she by reason of her enlarged environments, in the slightest degree, divorce herself from her former life of engaging in charitable as well as church duties, and she was frequently seen on the contrary, renewing her efforts in both fields with no abatement, whatever, of her old time activity.

She continued to take great interest, too, in her

musical studies and had become a most essential and popular factor as organist of the Presbyterian choir; and no church event was without her, either presiding at the organ or participating in some way with the heart of sincerity with which she was blessed.

On the occasion of every Sunday service, walking proudly by the side of her husband, she would leave him in the family pew while she would take her place in the choir.

As the months went by and spring came again, while Mildred did not ride her horse any more, Paul would take her for long drives into the country, once alighting from their carriage and revisiting the noble old beech tree, under whose limbs, Paul had first avowed his love for her. While they sat there, they again spoke to each other with love's accents as before, and were just as happy as on the well remembered day.

But while they may not have said the same things, nor have indulged in conduct calculated to have drawn the limpid eyed cows and other animals, as spectators, as once they had, yet there were many things that these married lovers had to say to each other; and there was one delicately dear subject about which they talked, that was ever interesting and that remained as a topic for subsequent family discussion.

Happy woman! Happy man!

They sat there, he, with his arm gently and tenderly encircling her—both made happy with the dearest of sweet memories of their love,—happy in the realization of the loyal hearts of the present, and

happy in the anticipation of the future. They were touched by the finger and gentility of God and His law of love. Their whispers were of His decree, and as she with flushed face, and he, with tender embrace, fondly discussed the coming event of motherhood, they were obeying and following His laws, which only surely bring happiness to those whom he joins as man and wife.

Returning home that day, Paul found several letters from his firm insisting upon his going to St. Louis upon important matters of business. He was neither anxious nor willing to go, but was persuaded by Mildred that he should not neglect his business, and so upon her insistence, he went. He spent only a day in the city after reaching there, and returned the next day.

What his firm discussed with him was the advisability of, and their wish that he should travel for the rapidly growing business. He had been regarded as having exceptional ability as a salesman and he was being urged to so apply himself. Paul had very emphatically refused, however, and had not hesitated to frankly assign as the reason for his refusal, the fact that he had married recently and that he would not absent himself from his wife. While accepting his excuse for not doing as had been desired, one of the firm with a knowing wink, said:

"Well being newly married, we can hardly blame him, but possibly there might be a change of opinion in the future and then we can secure your services, Paul?" he asked.

"Oh yes, when I change my mind; but that will never be," he exclaimed with much promptness.

He had told Mildred of the entire conversation and she was intensely pleased, and went to where he was sitting and threw herself into his lap. Kissing him and putting her arms around his neck and looking into his eyes, she said and asked:

"Oh my darling Paul, how I thank you for your loyal love for me.

"And dear, do you love me so well, that you will not travel for your house, in the future? You know you might become tired of me and be anxious to travel and be away from me."

"Why my dear Mildred, I will never become tired of you and I will not travel and I told them so, frankly, too. So do not fear sweetheart, your Paul will always be with you," he replied.

And indeed, what a just resolution he had made!

One day, Paul brought Dr. Larkin to the house, as he explained because of the doctor having that "lean and hungry Cassius-like look."

"No such thing! I just came out here to learn if you ever were going to apologize to me for the mean things you said to me in my office," the warring doctor said.

Mildred could not help laughing at the dear good natured raillery of her old friend.

"Well, you must remember that I did not stop in my punishment of you by merely talking to you, and I propose doing the same thing now," she answered

as she walked over to him and kissed him as she had done before.

"Well I suppose the next thing will be Paul shooting me, but I am yielding myself with great bravery to the danger I am placing myself in," he banteringly said.

After a most enjoyable meal, during which much pleasantry was indulged in, Paul excused himself to go and water the horses and the doctor remained with Mildred for quite a while.

When Paul came in, the doctor took his leave, being accompanied by Paul to the gate, where he said to him:

"Yes, my boy, I would advise you to stay right here, and I will send that nurse up right away."

About one o'clock that night Dr. Larkin walked down the stairway of the Hanley residence and going into the library, said to the anxiously waiting Paul:

"My dear boy, there is an exceedingly red-faced young lady upstairs crying her head off for you. So go to your daughter, Paul."

And he warmly shook the young father's hand. Accompanied by Dr. Larkin, Paul ascended the stairway, knelt at her bedside and kissed Mildred as she put her arm around his neck. Then he was permitted by Mildred's mother and nurse to look into the face of one who in after years would be a dear and irresistible instrumentality of love and happiness.

May I ask my dear reader, if you have been a father, or if you have been a mother, have you for-

gotten the nobility of humanity's heart, when for the first time, you beheld your first born? As you recall it, though dark and sadly intervening years may have passed since then, will human tongue or trenchant pen enable you to describe how proudly as a father, or fondly as a mother, you gazed with riveted eye upon that little child?

No you cannot, for that was the God that for the time, had become a part of you.

The world has ever been entertained by the artist with his versatile brush. He has made silent canvas tell us the tales of man's wars, his loves and his great attainments. He has taught us history—has portrayed the scenes of the life and death of the Saviour—has made glorious the deeds of Christianity, and hideous, the crimes of the world—has painted for us the magnificence of the rolling waves of the seas,—has made us behold the replica of the clouds, the moon, stars, sun and the bright blue sky; but where and when did he ever create so much of love, so much of power, so much of humanity, so much of beauty and so much of Godliness, as are to be found in the unpainted but beholden picture of—The Mother Nursing Her First Born?

Mildred's young motherhood had brought added beauty—and when Paul had remarked as much in the presence of Dr. Larkin and Mildred, the irrepressible doctor at once, with much mock earnestness, said:

"Suffering humanity! If that be true and it is a cure for her homliness and will possibly improve

her looks, hasten the oft coming of the stork, for charity's sake if not for beauty's sake."

But Paul was right. There was an intensified beam of the eye, and there was a harmonious coloring of the cheek and the marvelousness of that beautiful smile that had never been Mildred's before.

When mother and babe were placed beyond danger and she had progressed to the extent that she could walk around, there came happier days than ever. The devotion of Paul to both mother and child grew upon him and he often came near making a nuisance of himself as he would awkwardly attempt feats of fondling the baby. More like a child than a man, as he lounged away his days at home, his cup of happiness was well nigh full, and indeed, there was much spirited rivalry that had arisen between Paul and Mrs. Andrews as to their love and care for the much loved child.

Mildred had named her daughter "Aldine," over the protest of Paul, who insistently contended that the only name suitable was that of her mother. But the mother's wish was acquiesced in.

Time went rapidly by. Nothing but supreme happiness reigned at the home. There was not a marring circumstance that had ever arisen to disturb the tranquility of the little family. All were in good health and there seemed nothing lacking nor desired, except the wish that there should be no change of conditions existing.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ON THE ROAD.

OVER a year had gone by, when a dark cloud began to hover over the household of the Andrews family. John's health had for some time been failing him. At first, through sheer will power, he had fought off his ailment as being of little consequence; but there soon came the time when nature demanded a surrender and now he no longer went to his place of business, which Paul was compelled to take charge of.

Despite the vigilant care and attention he received at home and the skill and unceasing efforts of Doctor Larkin, the good man grew gradually weaker and weaker and finally was compelled to take to his bed. There seemed to be no particular ailment assailing him, but there appeared a general giving way of the man. He had worked untiringly throughout his life, with both mind and body, and the human machinery of the man was wearing itself away.

Dr. Larkin gravely comprehended his case as being most serious from the start and though he refrained from telling any one else, he had informed Paul that it was only a question of weeks before the end would come.

On a particular occasion he had spent a very restless day, and was so apparently sinking that the Doctor had informed the family that he could hardly last through the night. As the night wore on he continued to grow worse and just as dawn began to appear, he called in his feeble voice to his wife, who sat with Mildred by his bedside.

And with his loved ones around him, and with a smile on his lips, one of Nature's noblemen had passed away.

When the good man was laid away in the little cemetery, followed by the grief stricken mother and daughter and hosts of friends, both family and community had sustained an irreparable loss. Intense as was the grief of his little family, yet there was the greatest of all consolations in the realization that there could be no speculation as to the peaceful flight of his soul to his Maker.

Though a quiet unpretentious man, mild of manner and gentle of speech, kind, and always with generous heart, his was not the life that dashed upon you with impetuous word or deed. You did not learn to know the man in a day or a year. He grew into your heart with time and he became a factor with that type of bravery that enabled him to be a peaceful man, and to win his battles with peace, just as he passed away in peace.

The death of John had been a severe blow to his wife. Aged as she was, she was enabled to recall many years of their long wedded life, through which there had been only happiness. Her grief remained

with her and she could find only consolation in the affection she had for Mildred and little Aldine.

With his death, she was left more than a competence, and was in fact, surprised at the accumlation of the years since they first reached C. Notwithstanding the fact that he and his wife were liberal in a most commendable way, in church and charitable work, his exceptional ability as a business man had left her a very comfortable fortune. Paul had been entrusted with the winding up of all the business affairs and he had done so in a most profitable manner to her.

Mildred's mother was now living with her, though she had demurred to the suggestion, when Paul had added to Mildred's request that she do so, and they both became great sources of comfort to her.

Her affection for Paul was genuine and was most cordially returned by him, whose kindness for her, was present on all occasions, with his thoughtfulness

Paul had been several times called to St. Louis on business connected with his firm but he had always restricted himself to no greater absence than two or three days at a time, his desire always to return soon, not failing to give Mildred much pleasure.

On the occasion of one of these trips he had returned with his face denoting some mental worry. Mildred had asked him the cause. He replied that the members of his firm were again calling upon him to take the road as they had done before. He had denied consideration of their wishes, after talking it over with them.

"I do not want to do so, and I told them as much," Paul said as they discussed the matter.

"But, my dear, I have thought over the matter, and though I would prefer to have you with me always, do you not think it your duty to do so? They seem to think so much of your ability and want you so much, travel for them awhile," Mildred said.

"Yes, but I promised you that I would not do so," replied Paul.

"I know you did, dear, but your circumstances are quite different now, as compared to then. I have mother with me now and dear little Aldine, too, to keep me company," she answered and then continued:

"You can so arrange your territory that you can come to us for Sundays, could you not?"

"Yes, I could do that very well, but it would be hard on me to remain away from you. And dear, would you not get lonesome for your Paul?" he asked.

"Paul you know I would," said she, as she kissed him. "But I would always trust my Paul and would know that he would come to me whenever he could."

"Well, I will try it for a while, and if I do not find myself able to stand it, of course, I can give it up," he finally replied.

Accordingly, not long afterwards, Paul found himself again visiting the trade and mingling with hundreds of other "Knights of the Grip," throughout the territory he formerly had. In returning to his work he was greeted very cordially by his former

friends and brother salesmen, with whom he was deservedly popular.

He had reluctantly resumed this connection with his house, and at first had somewhat lagged in interest as he began his solicitation from town to town. And yet the spirit of competition and his desire to faithfully represent his house, so appealed to him, that he began to actively be alive to the work and responsibilities he had assumed.

He began writing letters every evening to Mildred and never failed to send his messages of love to her and their little baby. Mildrd would in turn, write to him to all addresses, which he would give. The first thing, always upon reaching every town, that he did, was anxiously to make inquiry at the hotel for his mail. If he received a letter from Mildred his countenance readily showed it; and if for any reason, he failed, bitter disappointment was his.

Though repeatedly requested to join his friends in diversions and indulgences they were so prone to, he was known by them for his most exemplary conduct in refusing. With him, there was no difficulty in resisting, and indeed, he found great pleasure in doing so as he thought of the queenly woman he had left at C., and who always awaited his home coming with her bountiful love.

The first week he had found to consist largely of loneliness and longing for the end of the week when he had arranged to be at home for Sunday.

Gradually, he began to accustom himself to the hardships entailed, and though he cherished the

thought of Sunday and the happiness it had in store for him, he resigned himself stoically to the drummer's life, if not with enthusiasm, yet in a manner that made it no longer oppressive to him.

Frequently, when away from home, Paul was made to see the phases of life, by no means uncommonly found to be parts and parcels in the make up of the average traveling salesman. Verily it can be said that some very rare species of man, can be found in their ranks. As a rule, a few of them are single men when at home and most of them are single men when away from home. The confession as to being married, is not often made by a large number.

They are generally, in fact, a broad minded class of men; lively and given to a spirit of jollity that becomes an element of their composition; usually possessed of a sense of humor that enables them to see even the bright side of a cloud. Taken as a whole, they are a big hearted and generous class of men, tickling their customers with the latest (or oldest, if usable) story, representing always the *best* house in his line and with each month's business "greater and grander than ever." When an unlassoed band of them get together, either at some country hotel or upon a railroad train, there is always one continuous flow of modesty in conversation, and scorn for exaggeration, that becomes a great charm to the spectators they entertain.

Then too, there are a few who have never found it difficult in tracing their physical beauty of countenance, and most charming personalities to the fact of

close kinship with Adonis himself. This class is composed and is made up of some very neat and up-to-date wardrobes, and may be easily taken for well dressed statues, as they motionlessly become glued to the most prominently public places on streets to be found, as they await the rustling skirts of a woman. Their dear and embryonic charms and smiles, up to this date have never been returned by any woman, but they are still trying.

For this class as well as that which did not attempt to hide their notorious infidelity to their wives, in constantly seeking the company of other women, and which he had so often observed, Paul had the greatest contempt.

Happily there were but few instances of this character, but those with which he had come in contact, were enough to draw from him his most intense repulsion. He could not understand how such men could reward the virtue of the wife at home, with such perfidy!

These impressions of antagonism to the misbehaviour of such men, he felt sure would always enable him to see his beloved Mildred in all her purity and make him the more loyal to her.

As the months went on Paul had successfully built up a large trade throughout his territory, and was beginning to receive the most complimentary letters from his firm, which greatly pleased him as well as Mildred, to whom he proudly showed the letters.

Mildred was proud of Paul for many reasons, and particularly because of the great love he always

unmistakably would show for her. His letters had always regularly come to her and they were ever her heart's delight, when she would eagerly open and read them. During all that time, he had never failed to come home for Sundays and he always found her waiting for him on Saturday night for his home coming.

And with such a love and such fidelity, what woman would not be proud?

# CHAPTER IX.

## THE FALL.

OF the towns Paul "made," D—was the largest in population. He was always pleased when he reached there. It was easier for him to deal with the merchants of that place, for some reason, though competition was stronger than elsewhere. But he had always been enabled to take larger orders, in not only numbers, but in quantity sold. He remained here longer than at other places and had made a great many acquaintances among the business men and other citizens.

Once, when engaged in selling a merchant in D., with whom he was on most friendly terms, a young lady had entered the store, temporarily interrupting his dealings with the storekeeper. She made several purchases while there, it being necessary for her to walk by where he was standing, in order to be shown some article being bought by her. Paul politely stepped aside for her to pass and as he did so he looked at her as she approached, as did she toward him. He could not avoid seeing that she was a very beautiful young lady. Her dark hair and eyes at once, reminded him of Mildred. He had caught but one glance from her, but he was impressed with her extraordinary beauty of face. Once when his eye

was turned in her direction, as she animatedly talked to his merchant friend, he observed that she, too, was looking at him. Their eyes met for only a moment, but his first impression was somewhat intensified as to her charm of appearance. As she finished trading and walked toward the front door with the merchant, he found himself looking in her direction with no little interest and admiration.

Upon the return of the groceryman, he finished selling the bill of goods. After putting the substanial order in his pocket, and closing his sample case, he was about to leave, after shaking hands with his customer, when he suddenly asked:

"Who was the young lady?"

The merchant smilingly replied:

"Well, now, do you know, she just made the same inquiry as to yourself. That was Mrs. Kiler, one of our most beautiful girls. She is a young widow, who lives with her mother up on the next corner as you go towards town."

"Indeed, she is a most attractive woman," Paul replied.

After leaving the store and while on the way to his hotel, Paul was compelled to pass the corner indicated as the home of the young lady, and as he did so, saw her sitting upon the steps of the little cottage, playing with a little child. As he glanced toward her, he thought that she had not impolitely indicated recognition of him.

That same night he left D., and continued to make the towns upon his trip.

He did not fail to write to Mildred, that night.

Several times, however, before retiring, he thought of the handsome woman he had seen, and her face was before him, often for many days afterward.

It was several weeks later, when he returned to the town of D. upon his regular trip. He was making the usual call upon merchants and had entered the store of Johnston & Company where he had seen Mrs. Kiler.

It was late in the afternoon and the proprietor did not have time to give Paul his order as he was preparing to close up. He asked Paul to leave his sample case in his store until morning, to which Paul assented. The merchant was preparing to close the doors, when there suddenly came into the store the object of much admiration upon Paul's part, when last at the store.

"Oh, Mr. Johnston," she said, "I hope I am not too late, but mother wanted me to get some potatoes," as she handed him the basket.

"You are never too late, Mrs. Kiler," the merchant replied.

He took her basket, and filling it with potatoes, was about to hand it to her.

"Here, this will be too heavy for you to carry," he said. As he spoke, he turned with a smile and said:

"Mrs. Kiler, let me make you acquainted with Mr. Hanley, an old friend of mine and who will act as my delivery boy, I am sure."

With mutual looks of recognition, they acknowl-

edged the introduction,—and soon afterward Paul found himself walking with pleasure by the side of Mrs. Kiler, as he carried her purchase.

"I think that we have met before," Paul remarked as they walked out of the store.

"Yes, we have, but you must have a remarkable memory," she naively replied.

"Yet you must remember that there are some occasions when you cannot forget," he replied, intending his remark to be understood as complimentary to her.

"I thank you, kind sir!" she girlishly answered with a mocking smile, but continuing she added: "Are you like all of your drummer friends, just as adept in giving away bouquets as you are in selling goods?"

They had reached the gate of her home and Paul was wishing she had lived a greater distance from the store.

"Well, but how did you know my occupation?" Paul asked.

"Why, Mr. Johnston told me when I asked him as to who you were," was her very candid answer.

"But may I not ask you why you should have asked as to my name?" he awkwardly asked.

"Oh, I don't know—possibly for the same reason that prompted your asking the same question about me after I had left the store that day," she answered with her laughing eyes frankly meeting his.

"I presume, of course, that he further gossiped about me and told you many objectionable things

about me, after I left town?" continued Paul with his questioning.

"Yes, he did tell me one very objectionable thing about you. But Mr. Hanley do not stand there holding that basket. Delivery boys do not usually act that way. Take it in and put it on the porch," she continued assuming a commanding tone of voice.

With feigned humility, he proceeded to take the basket toward the front porch when she called to him:

"Have I not told you always to deliver your packages at the back door?" she jestingly asked.

Paul, very obediently took his basket to the rear door and deposited it upon the steps after which he came back to the front yard where he beheld the fascinating woman, as she smilingly met him.

Speculating in his own mind as to what information Mr. Johnston might have volunteered, he now assumed that he had told of his being a married man and asked:

"I can imagine what Johnston told you that was so objectionable and I suppose you will not let me see you again because of that fact?"

With that he held out his hand to say good bye. As she extended her hand, her eyes seemed pleasingly serious and kindly as did her voice, when she replied:

"Mr. Hanley, I know that you are married and that you expect me to answer you in the affirmative, but I propose being honest with you as well as myself. On the contrary, if I thought you cared to, I would ask you to come and see me tonight. Now have I

debased myself in your estimation because I speak honestly?"

As she answered Paul pressed her hand in great elation:

"This evening?"

"Yes, at eight," was her answer.

For a moment they stood with clasped hands and looked earnestly into the eyes of each other.

Shortly, he turned away and walked to his hotel after assuring her of his intended coming.

As he walked up the street, experiencing intense exultation, he scarcely understood his own feelings. But of one thing he felt more than assured.

He had met a most delightfully charming woman.

He felt strangely too, an influence she had so easily exercised over him.

Ah, how beautiful! How pleasingly engaging in manner and speech!

He stepped with buoyancy of stride. He was pleased with himself!

Suddenly there came to him as he walked on, the picture of Mildred and little Aldine!

No! He would write this woman his excuses for breaking the engagement! He would do nothing to rob Mildred of his love!

He went into the hotel. He met some acquaintances and engaged them in conversation. Finally, he went into the dining room, with troubled mind and little appetite. Afterwards upon returning to the hotel office, he sat down and bravely, as he thought, wrote his excuses for not making the invited call,

and addressing the envelope, arose with the object of finding a messenger boy.

He had thrust the note into his pocket and had gone upon the street, and for a time, stood in front of the hotel. He began to revolve the situation in his mind, with the conflicting emotions now assailing him.

His love for Mildred need not be hurt, he said to himself. No influence could ever accomplish that! Indeed, was he not strong enough as a man that he could be master of himself? Certainly, he was!

He tore up the note.

Promptly at eight o'clock that evening, Paul entered the home of Myra Kiler.

If Paul had entertained any idea that her conduct would be any different from very ladylike, the reception and entertainment he met with, effectually disabused his mind of that impression. With an easy and accomplished conversationalist as this young lady was, Paul felt himself embarrassed to no little extent, in his surprise at the reception. He had met a most versatile woman in many ways. With her cleverness, he never discovered that she had made him talk of himself. She became thoroughly acquainted with him and he had learned but very little of her. When she did talk of herself, she impressed him with the idea that she felt keenly her unfortunate inability to rise higher than her embarrassing station of life and regretting her lot as being a most disagreeable one.

At such a time Paul thought he could see a tear

appear and that the voice trembled slightly as she spoke.

He had ventured his great admiration of her. Impetuously he had taken her hand in his and had assured her of the friendshsip he felt for her. He knew that he would prove worthy of her confidence. And she had pressed his hand with warmth as she thanked him, for his kindness. She valued his friendship far more than she could express. But did he dare?

She told him how wrong it was for her to accept his attentions, knowing him to be married, but would he think less of her for it?

How dear it was that he didn't!

Once, she placed her hand upon his shoulder, as she talked to him and he had felt the thrill of a sensation that was overpowering him. He wanted to take her into his arms; and he would have tried, for with cleverness of her intellectual tact she had impressed him with the thought that she was a most remarkable woman.

A short time before he left he had arisen and was telling her that he would go, for he must take his train that night. They had approached the door, when she said to him:

"I am so afraid that you will think harshly of me, because of what I have done."

He turned to her. She was irresistible. He was holding her hand in his. He felt the charm of her very presence. He suddenly put his arm around her and drawing her to him though of course she strug-

gled against it, kissed her passionately time and again. She finally lay in his arms no longer opposing him. His hot breath was upon her cheek. His heart beat fast as he pressed the beautiful woman to him. She began to manifest some emotion toward him. She had returned his affection with her own kisses. He then suddenly observed that she was apparently weeping. She had put her handkerchief up to her eyes.

"Oh," she said, "I am doing so wrong. You must go. I want your friendship and respect. I know I will lose it now."

"No, you will not. You have more than friendship from me. Can't you see how I am drawn to you?"

And with her in his arms again, he many times kissed her good night as she clung to him.

Now, he breathed into the ears of the woman, his love, his undying affection; that which could never be destroyed. Yes, he would soon return. Could she love him? She was ashamed—so ashamed to acknowledge it. But she had loved him the first time she saw him! Did he not understand? Had she not shown it?

For the first time Mildred did not receive her regular letter.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE VAMPIRE'S VICTIM.

ON the following day, the acuteness of conscience had been such, because of his first act of faithlessness toward Mildred, that he was suddenly and decidedly remorseful. He resolved that he would terminate his friendship with his most recently found acquaintance, and conduct himself as he had always done before. He would not run the risk of jeopardizing his love for the one so entitled to it.

He was so berating himself, that he wrote to Mildred telling her that he had been in the country and did not have an opportunity to write to her. And throughout the remainder of the week, he never failed to regularly write his daily letter.

But he was unable to dismiss the face of the enchantress from his mind, strong as were his resolutions. His mind frequently took him to the little cottage in D. He thought of her as not only an intelligently pleasing woman, but he had admired her, too, because of what he deemed her splendid womanly qualities in every regard. He had not forgotten what he deemed her tears,—nor had he forgotten her frank admission of her interest in him.

And, too, he had even recalled that she had said that she *loved* him. He felt no little pride, and reflected some of his vanity, as he thought of how he had impressed her.

On the Saturday night following, when Mildred met him at the front door, he was apparently the same Paul that had left during the first of the week. He spent the day with Mildred and their little daughter, and was making commendable efforts to dismiss the young widow from his mind.

Only once, did he appear in an unusual role to Mildred during the day. She thought as he seemed to be looking in an absent minded manner, out of the window, while holding Aldine, that he did not for some reason seem exactly at ease. She thought, too, that he appeared just a trifle restless, as he would walk around.

But he was all fondness as he had told Mildred good bye when he left Sunday night for his week's trip.

Once, again, during the week, Paul failed to write home. And, too, he did not write as lengthy letters as formerly. During the week he had written that he had been asked to go to St. Louis by his firm and that he might not be able to reach C. for Sunday.

As a matter of fact, he arrived in D. on an afternoon train Saturday and that evening found him at the home of Myra Kiler. Upon his arrival at her home, her greeting was such that he was highly pleased. He had taken the precaution to send a note to her as soon as he arrived at D. and had been

assured by her answer of her pleasure at his coming to see her.

In a most serious frame of mind, she had, however, during the evening expressed herself as feeling highly reprehensible because of her indiscrtion toward him and had said to him, among other things:

"Mr. Hanley, I am not blaming you, but myself. I know I have done very wrong, and I know I should not have asked you here. I must not allow myself to be unjust to your wife. And so I have made up my mind to tell you that we must not see each other again. While I must be frank and fair enough to confess, again, my regard for you, I will not knowingly hurt you or yours."

As she spoke to him, Paul imagined that he could see much regret in her face, as she bent her head.

Ah, how noble did she appear to him! What a gloriously just creature she was!

What could he say in reply, to such a just determination?

He made the same reply other cowardly husbands have made, knowing its falsity and realizing, too, the great wrong to the love of the faithful wife, who was at that very hour sighing her regret at his first failure to return home as usual.

"But, sweet woman, you are not depriving another of any right. You are not doing any injustice to any one but me. You do not know how unhappy a man I am and have been. You shall not so summarily dismiss me, now that I have found you. You cannot understand how much of happiness you have already

become to me and how much you can be in the future?"

"Oh, Mr. Hanley, it is so hard for me. You know that I am so helplessly situated that my own unhappiness can easily be brought about, if it were ever known that I should receive your attentions. Your infatuation for me, I fear, is only that passing fancy that will soon disappear. I cannot bring myself to believe that you really love me. Why should you love me? You do not know me with all my faults—and if you did, I know that you could never think of giving me your love," she replied as she looked into his eyes.

Paul arose from his chair and went to her side.

"Dear woman, do not make me miserable with such utterances. Your own heart tells you of my love for you. I know that since the time I first saw you, you won your way to my heart. It is all yours. Take it or dismiss me from you forever. I never knew what the reality of human love was, until I looked into your eyes, fair one. I love you better than all else in the world," he said. As he finished speaking he drew her to him. She not only did not resist him but she answered him by saying:

"Yes, and I love you with all the heart within me," as she nestled her head upon his breast with upturned face, the lips of which he kissed with eager and frantic affection.

Paul Hanley had imagined himself strong in mind and heart.

He had gone out into the world with the imprint

of a noble wife's kisses upon his lips. He had often expressed his contempt as well as pity for men whom he knew to have perfidiously brought shame upon the purity of a faithful love, by seeking and loving another.

But his was by no means an isolated example of the weakness of men, whose loves have been those of greatest devotion to wives of years, whose hearts had never been questioned in all their fealty, who have been suddenly made to fall, by reason of yielding to the charms of another—making them asperse loyalty, debase manhood and plunge into the unhappy miseries that become their contributions to the great crucible of human woes. Strange as it may seem, the best of men have succumbed to the influence of the worst of women. There have been unlocked doors to greatest happiness, permitting sorrows to enter instead—and hearts have been broken and ruthlessly thrown into the scrap pile of life—all through the incontinentcy of loves that seemed imperishable.

## CHAPTER XI.

### A WOMAN'S FORGIVENESS.

THERE now came many days when Mildred would not hear from Paul. Then, too, he began to remain away from her on Sundays, without even the excuses which he had at one time given. When, if perchance, she should ask him why he did not come home at such times, he would petulantly make evasive replies.

Once, she had noticed a moodiness of disposition, so foreign to his nature, that she had gone to where he sat, and putting her arms around his neck, and with tears in her eyes, had asked:

"Paul, dear Paul, won't you tell your Mildred what has worried you so much of late? You are not like your dear old self."

His reply, on that occasion, was:

"Oh, I am worried about business—that's all."

But Mildred knew her husband had other worries than business affairs.

"But Paul, why don't you come home to me for Sunday as you used to do at first? Surely, there is no business transacted on the Sabbath day? We miss you so much, my dear husband," she had sadly said to him and then added:

"Oh how I long for those dear days, when you were with us always."

"Now, see here, Mildred, I come home as often as I can. It is no easy matter to make long drives, some times at night, in order to catch a train and then travel all night, in order to get here," he replied to her, somewhat worried with her.

"In any event, I wish you would give up the road. Won't you, Paul?" she eagerly asked him.

"You are the very one that insisted that I should travel. Now, here you are asking me to stop. Let this be the last time you mention the subject, Mildred, for I tell you, that I will not do so," he answered in an irritated tone of voice and manner.

The poor wife and mother was sadly seeing a most remarkable change in her husband. It grieved her. She did not understand it. What could be the cause?

Months had passed and husband and wife had now become estranged to such an extent, that Mildred had ceased to ask Paul any questions about his affairs, either business or otherwise. But she never failed to meet him in the most affectionate manner, nor to regretfully see him leave.

Twice, he had come from down town, his breath plainly showing that he had been drinking some strong liquor. This gave her added worry; but she felt great timidity in mentioning it, and refrained from doing so.

While at a neighbor's house, one day, she happened to casually be reading a D. paper when she noticed an item in connection with a description of a

ball that had been given at D. and this was the item she read.

"The first prize for the handsomest and most graceful couple on the floor was awarded to Mr. Paul Hanley and his partner, the beautiful Mrs. Myra Kiler."

Requesting the privilege of taking the paper, Mildred returned home.

And Paul was paying attention to other women? Surely not! No, not Paul! Paul could do nothing so dishonorable!

But notwithstanding her mental comments she had gone to her room and yielded to tears of unhappiness.

When Paul returned home, after she had read the article as to the prize winners of the ball room, Mildred surprised Paul by asking him:

"Paul, do you ever dance any while you are away?"

"No," he curtly replied.

"Well Paul, what does this mean?" and she handed him the clipping from the newspaper.

Glancing at the newspaper item, his displeasure was evident.

"Well?" he asked.

"But Paul, you said you never danced. Who is Mrs. Myra Kiler?" she asked.

"Oh, she is the wife of one of the boys on the road," he easily lied to her. "Now is there any other cross examination in store for me?" he asked.

The miserable woman was now kneeling at his feet —all tears, unhappy and dejected.

"Paul, my husband, my sweetheart, tell me is there some other woman? You do not love Mildred any more, do you?" she asked, her face telling of all the awful anguish she was suffering.

"Why no, of course there is no other woman," he replied.

He raised her from her position and kissed her. His heart had not become so hardened that his conscience did not awaken sorrow for the sobbing wife who was pleading so pathetically for the love she felt was being lost to her.

"Come, Mildred, you must not be so foolish," he said to her as he took his hat from the table and walked out into the yard.

Mildred saw him standing in one position for a long time, seemingly in deep meditation and dejection.

When he left that night, she had gone to the door with him.

"Oh, Mildred, I will come back soon. Do not worry," he said, and then walked hastily away.

He did come back soon, but he did not bring much pleasure to her heart upon his return.

Mildred had no idea as to the time of night it was, but her mother had come to her on the following Sunday night, and awakening her, told her that she had heard a strange noise at the front door.

She and her mother cautiously and with some fear descended the stairway to the reception room which was always kept lighted.

Standing there, Mildred heard unmistakable groans from the front porch.

"Mildred! Mildred!" she heard a voice call.

She knew it was Paul.

She at once opened the door and there stretched upon the floor was her husband. She immediately went to him and bent over him.

"Paul! Oh, Paul! Are you hurt?" she agonizingly entreated.

Paul Hanley was insensibly drunk!

The two women succeeded after great effort in getting him upon the inside, and finally aroused him sufficiently, that with their aid he went into the bedroom, downstairs, where he fell helplessly on to the bed.

Mildred pulled off his shoes and his coat and vest and then covered him up.

Kneeling by the bedside, poor Mildred wept scalding tears that her heart prompted.

"Oh, my God! My God! Is this the noble Paul, you once gave me?" she moaned.

And then the faithful and loving wife threw herself upon the breast of the snoring man and gave way to all of the pent up misery within her.

"Paul! Paul! Dear Paul! Your Mildred's heart is breaking. You do not love us any more."

After the mother had tried unavailingly, to induce her to go upstairs, she continued to remain with Paul. She took his coat and vest and was in the act of hanging them upon a chair, when she felt some-

thing heavy in the coat which proved to be a bottle of whiskey. As she pulled it out, a letter was also drawn from the pocket, falling upon the floor. She stooped and picked it up. As she looked at it, she saw that it was postmarked at D., and she also readily noticed that the hand writing was that of a woman. The letter was addressed to Paul.

She felt that she should not open it. And yet, was there great harm in doing so?

She opened it.

What she read froze the blood in her veins, and this was the letter:

"My Sweetheart:

"My darling boy will never know how much pleasure your sweet thoughtful letter brought me. And if you knew how my heart bounded with joy when I opened it and read it, you would write oftener.

"And oh, my precious one, when on the next day I received that dearest of all presents which your great heart has given me, imagine my joy! A sealskin cloak! Just to think of it! That has always been my greatest desire.

"Oh, you old darling! How I love you! And how I *will* love you when I see you.

"Come to me, dear, that you may know how *much* I love you.

"Yours always with love,

MYRA."

Suspicion, that founder of doubt, brings a torturing jealousy that drives ever and ever into madness

of mind, and is one of the greatest punishments mentality can bear.

But the realization of every doubt being resolved into the dreadfulness of reality and fact, is the genuine soul torture—the power that in the end actually breaks hearts.

This good woman had, for months tried to suppress thoughts and fears that had pursued her relentlessly. She had long known of the waning love that she thought would ever be hers. She had not been satisfied with any of Paul's answers or excuses to her, and now she was to learn that the worst fears were more than realized.

What, oh, what must she do? The father of Aldine was unworthy of trust!

And oh the horror of it! She was to become a mother again!

Pitying and merciful God! Was there no way that her heart could escape so much cruel punishment?

She replaced the letter in Paul's pocket and went upstairs to her child and lay by her side—but her lot was to suffer and not to sleep.

Paul did not rise before noon. His awakening was one of sickness. He became a restless and nervous man. He was compelled to look around him several times before he realized where he was.

Home! Home!

When Mildred went to him he felt the great intensity of his bitterness of regret and remorse. He could see how keenly she had suffered. But still she

was by his side trying to help him through his sickness. She stroked his forehead, ran her fingers through his hair—she even laid her cheek against his and cried as did he.

She said nothing at that time about the letter.

When finally, he arose, pale and nervous, he had refused to eat or partake of anything but some coffee. He did not undertake to leave that day. He would sit and intently look into Mildred's eyes apparently asking for her forgiveness.

"Mildred," he said as he nervously walked over to her, "I have put myself beyond the possibility of your forgiveness, I fear!"

He knelt at her feet and put his head in her lap.

"No Paul, while you have cruelly stabbed my heart, I will not say that I cannot forgive you. But Paul, while I want to forget, I want you to be man enough to explain some things to me. I am grieved that I should ever have seen my husband drunk. But as hard as it is, I can forgive you for it," she replied.

"Ah, my noble Mildred!" he cried.

"But, Paul, I want you to explain to me the meaning of the letter which you have in your pocket," she said significantly.

"What letter?" he asked.

"The letter you received from the wife of one of your fellow salesmen," she answered.

"Why Mildred, I never received any letter of that character," he said with some show of alarm.

"You told me that Myra Kiler was the wife of a

friend of yours. Now please *read* this letter which she so affectionately and gratefully wrote you," she said.

Paul put his hand in his pocket and drew out the letter which he did not remember having received, because of his intoxicated condition.

He read the letter with a face which depicted the awfulness of his guilt.

There was no escaping the situation. The tell tale letter could not be contradicted. There was no plausible excuse that he could offer now.

"What have you to say Paul?" she coldly asked.

"I can say nothing, except that I have mistreated you. I know that I cannot and dare not ask your forgiveness. My mind tells me that you would refuse it, as you should," he said with his head slowly falling upon his breast.

"Listen, Paul, you do not understand me. You have broken Mildren's heart. I know now that you could have been kinder if you had killed me, rather than to make me live with a dead heart within me. For the sake of Aldine I want you to be a man, Paul. She has no right to have such a father as you are making of yourself. And oh, if you only would, Paul, you could revive my own dead heart. Will you Paul? Dear Paul, will you not? You see that I am asking for myself last. Aldine's rights are first. She has a right to intervene. I will do what any mother should do for her child. Speak to me, Paul! Speak man! I beg of you."

Paul Hanley beheld the weeping woman before

him. Her face evinced all the suffering she had undergone. She was pleading for her child and for herself last.

"Listen, Mildred, I promise you that I will be a better man and that I will sever all relations with Myra Kiler, if you will only forgive me," he answered not with any great feeling, but he had spoken seriously and directly.

Mildred ran to him and threw her arms around him. He took her into his lap and with her head upon his breast she said:

"Oh, Paul, if you want to save Mildred, you will remain true to your promise, for you are gradually destroying my mind and heart," and saying as much, she burst into tears and constant sobbing that revealed how great was the agony of her heart.

The noble hearted woman had done that which the world has ever required woman to do and that which she has always done.

She had really forgiven the great sin of her husband.

Kind reader, do I overdraw the picture?

Do you not remember many sad faced Mildreds whose loyal hearts and life's dreams of happiness have been broken and shattered and whose pathways have taken them through endless sorrow and gloom, because of forsaken loves? Can you not recall many Mildreds who, though spurned, crushed and deserted, yet through all their suffering and tears could smile at the slightest promise of reform and freely forgive?

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE BROKEN HEART.

THERE had been a most valuable addition to the choir of the Presbyterian Church. Willard Gordon who had been perfecting his musical studies with a view of making use of his wonderful bass voice, was now located in C.—with his wealthy father. He had delighted congregations and audiences to such an extent that there was a most noticeable increase in attendance at church services, and it was generally conceded that the great rich voice of the easterner was directly responsible for it. Members of the church and spectators alike were always attracted by the usual services and by the never failing and good sermon of Dr. Eldred; but when the handsome soloist arose and began one of his renditions, it was easy to observe the real attraction. He was invariably given a special number at every service. And as the deep rich and mellow roll of his voice with rythmic vibration, found its way with great charm to every ear he was an easy master. His assistance gratuitously rendered to the choir, became most invaluable. With his splendid voice and added abilities as a director, he and Mildred had brought

the standard of the choir to an advanced status, of a very high order.

Willard Gordon was not only a much sought after man on account of his musical abilities, but he became an indispensably important social factor in all circles. The very high standing of his own family in C. had made his entrance into the society of C. an easy matter. His very handsome face and commanding figure, with his polish of refined manner had made of him a very attractive man.

Urbane and gentlemanly, he became deservedly a most popular man, and easily ingratiated himself into the favor of the citizens, generally.

At the regular meeting for practice of the choir on every Friday night, Willard Gordon was always present, with his pleasant manners and great good humor. He was passionately fond of music and had not failed to note and appreciate the abilities of Mildred. Their community of tastes and accomplishments had made for them a most agreeable companionship, and thrown together very often, they had become very good friends.

When he sang at some public entertainment, she always was his accompanist, and on many occasions he would be her escort home after such events and from choir practice. At social gatherings he was an invited and entertained guest at her home, at which time he never failed in his assistance at delighting her guests with his marvelous voice.

To her, he was always most gentlemanly in his conduct, and she had properly very much admired

him. He was capable of, and lost no opportunity to show his thoughtful consideration of others and their rights. At times, he would enter energetically into church work and his jovial and laughing face became somewhat familiar with the poor as he would come into contact with them.

He never knew of the great sorrow that had entered the heart of Mildred, though on many occasions, he easily perceived what he thought to be a saddened expression in contrast with his first recollections of her. Once he had said to her as he had regarded the apparent change:

"I am afraid that my friend is not feeling as well as usual. Am I right, my dear Mrs. Hanley?"

"Why no, I am not, now, and have not been in my usual good health; but know that I shall soon be myself again," she had politely replied.

She did not tell him, as she could have done the cause of the change in her appearance. She had, of course, silently borne her afflictions, having no confidant but her mother, to whom she alone took her heavy heart.

With the coming of April, Mildred had again become a mother—this time of a little baby boy, whom she afterwards had named George.

Though Paul had known of the coming event, he was not at home to greet the advent of his son. It was the cause of added grief to the dear mother and her heart keenly felt the affront motherhood so much would resent.

Dr. Larken had commented upon his absence, in a most delicate way, by saying:

"It is too bad that Paul could not have been here. I am sure he is detained unavoidably."

But Mildred knew better. She felt and knew that his heart had taken him to the side of another.

After all the promises he had made her, she had information of a most reliable source that he had now become more attentive to Myra Kiler than ever before.

And indeed, the information to that effect was woefully accurate.

For poor Paul had not been able to keep his promise to Mildred. He had gone directly from Mildred's arms, after all of her entreaties and tears, to the embraces of the woman who was ruining his own heart, where he had lingered long into the night.

He had lavishly showered costly gifts and presents upon her, of every description. Had provided her with a most expensive piano and had pandered to the most erratic whims and fancies of the woman, and was always content to listen to her endearments, and her more than necessary thanks. He had hung upon her—"I love you," and had believed her. He trusted her implicitly.

He had descended to that last round of the ladder, when he even consulted with the woman as to their prospective marriage, when Mildred should divorce him.

In the meantime, he continued to worship at her

feet with a fawning, that to her became repulsive; but she continued to be a willing recipient of all the munificence of pretentious gifts and costly presents, which he continued to bestow upon her.

Mildred had consulted her faithful friend,, Robert McElroy, who was a prominent young lawyer at M. and he had learned without difficulty of the extent to which Paul's degradation had carried him.

From once being regarded as the proud and loyal husband, his love affair was the jest of the road and was referred to as "Pol's love."

How indeed, the mighty had fallen! And Mildred knew it all.

She felt and knew, too, that Paul had unjustly murdered her love. She was a changed woman.

As she lay in bed, with her second babe by her side and slowly recovered, she felt all the love of her heart leave. And when he would return home, now and then, she no longer was the Mildred of old, to him. She was cold and distant toward him and he saw and felt it. She no longer met him at the door with her love kiss, nor did she have the ready fondness in the farewell of other days. There was no doubt of it now! The chasm was hopelessly wide which he had constructed.

There remained only the burial of Mildred's love.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### FILLING OF THE VOID.

WITH well barred doors, drawn curtains and sealed lips, that attempt to keep from the public the individual sorrows of the home, there ever comes the time, however, when they filter through walls to listening ears and are then taken up with gossiping tongues to be disseminated throughout every avenue and channel of the little worlds lived in. Very often, indeed, are the bitter hours of the sad, lonely and broken heart, the common property of the world, buffeted around and distorted or made to grow with each telling and repetition of the heart's sad story.

And so, it was not long until the waywardness of Paul and the misery of Mildred became the talk of the little town.

There were many friends of Mildred who silently sympathized with her, though she bravely attempted to keep her saddened secrets locked within her own breast, secure from others.

Yet, when the little baby boy had become several months old, she had with much fortitude undertaken to mingle with her old friends, with an affectation of her former self.

But there were a few whom she did not deceive, and who were enabled to easily penetrate her disguise and know her real heart.

Among them was Willard Gordon. He, as had many others, had learned of the cruelty of the strange and much changed husband toward her.

When walking home with her from a choir meeting, he had not hesitated to boldly but gentlemanly, address her upon the subject.

"Mrs. Hanley, I know you will not take offense at what I am going to say to you. You are a noble woman worthy of the very greatest happiness in the world. And with recognition of the fact, that we have been and are old friends, I want to tell you how deeply I sympathize with you in the intense unhappiness you are experiencing. Do not attempt to deny it to me. I know it, and every one knows how unjustly you are suffering. Dear friend, know then how genuinely my heart goes out to you."

Mildred did not attempt to deny, but upon the contrary she sighed heavily and replied to him:

"You do not know how much I appreciate your dear sympathy for me, my good friend. I would expect nothing else from you. I sometimes think it is more than I can bear—and I fear I cannot stand it much longer," she sadly replied.

They had reached her home and as he turned to leave her at the front door, he extended his hand and with much feeling said, as he held her hand in his:

"Dear Mrs. Hanley, whatever happens will you remember me as a true and devoted friend?"

"Oh, I shall not forget, and I would have known as much if you had not so told me, dear friend," she said to him as she responded to the gentle pressure of his hand and had turned and entered the front door.

It was now December, and the usual plans and preparations were being made by the various churches for the coming of the Xmas Day. Provision was being made for the usual distribution of charities, and entertainments as well as necessary effort for appropriate church services, had brought into activity, the membership of the Presbyterian church.

At many of their meetings, Mildred and Willard Gordon were frequently thrown into each other's company.

Frequent reference was made, when they were alone, to Paul. She appreciated the kindly sympathy which he extended her and was not averse to frankly discussing it with him.

In fact, she seemed to derive comfort from all that he said.

Their friendship for each other had commenced to grow until it seemed most natural for them to be together. He never failed to take her home and on one or two occasions had entered her home for a short while.

Once, when they had reached her home and while they were discussing some feature of a church exercise, as they stood standing in the hallway after entering, he had taken her hand in his. He looked her fairly in the face.

She returned his look and thought she could read that which was more than mere friendship.

"Unhappy woman, can you not see and do you not know how my heart has become yours? Is it so wrong for me to tell you as much? Can I hope ever to claim your heart as mine? I love you Mildred Hanley!" he impetuously cried as he attempted to place his arms around her.

Mildred hastily stepped away from him and with some show of feeling said:

"No, Mr. Gordon, you forget yourself! You have no right to address me upon that subject. My husband has been unjust to me in all of his mistreatment of me, but I am still his wife and you must treat me as such. I am grateful for your sympathy and friendship, which I prize more highly than that of any one. But you must appreciate my position, my friend."

She saw that her friend had been keenly hurt by what she had said. He had evidenced his great embarrassment, and was turning to leave, when he said:

"Forgive me! Forgive me! If I have hurt you. I will not do so again," and walked to the door.

"But Mr. Gordon, my dear friend," she at once said, "you are hurt at something I have said. You shall not leave me feeling as you do."

She walked to him, and putting her hands, one upon each shoulder, continued:

"Dear, dear friend, you must not take offence at what poor Mildred has said to you. You have

become so necessary to me in all of your noble friendship, I cannot let you leave me in your present frame of mind."

"You have not offended me, nor can you by anything you may say. My dear woman, I know that I have done very wrong in what I have said to you. It was only my heart that was attempting to speak to you. You must not pay any attention to me. But you must let me tell you as you must already know, that I yield myself in admiration for you that will always make me your slave. I know that I must surrender whatever there may be of impulse as toward you. I must respect your rights of womanhood and must appreciate the position you occupy."

When he had gone and Mildred was alone, she succumbed to the unhappiness of her saddened condition. She had begun to feel her loneliness and to yield to a most hopeless view of what the future might have in store for her. She sat looking into what would under any other conditions, have been the cheerful fireplace; but as she looked, every flame seemed to spell the misery she was every hour compelled to experience and to mock at even the possibility of any hope of happiness.

She thought of the words of Willard Gordon.

Though she did not feel that she loved him, yet she very much admired him and began to chide herself with having given possible offense to him.

When next she saw him at a rehearsal, he was politely courteous to her, but there was something lacking in his usual manner toward her and she had

purposely avoided him afterwards and had walked home in company with others who were going up her street.

She attended the next choir meeting and could see that he was keeping away from her and she had again gone home without his accompanying her.

She began to think she had lost a good friend.

It was now the week before Xmas.

Paul had not even written to her for more than two weeks. She indeed felt herself a deserted woman. The world was preparing to show its happiness and receive its distributed offerings of joy. There was "no peace and good will" that she could enjoy, however.

Her heart, torn with Paul's infidelity and beset and beseiged with dark and hovering clouds, always, how long, oh how long, must she continue to suffer?

Added to all of her woes, Robert McElroy had written her that Paul had continued his increasing madness in his love for Myra Kiler and that he had been seen in St. Louis a week before with her.

She had gone to the opera house, that evening where the last rehearsal was had for an entertainment, in which Willard Gordon was to sing. She was to play his accompaniment.

She had played for him and as that great voice of his sang a famous song, she felt a strange influence come over her;—she felt that the power of his voice, in a measure denoted the man.

Before the end of the rehearsal, she contrived to

go to him and in a voice he had never heard before, said to him:

"I want you to take me home tonight. Will you?**

He eagerly answered her in the affirmative.

After the rehearsal she found herself once more by the side of her friend.

As they walked up the street toward home, she had said to him:

"You have made up your mind to remain away from me and I did not propose having you do so. Now, aren't you ashamed of yourself?"

Just as she spoke they reached the steps. It had commenced to rain, and she had invited him in. Upon entering she had led him into the sitting room where there was a cheerful fire.

When he had seated himself, she reminded him that he had not answered her question.

Willard Gordon arose and went to her as she stood near the open grate and said:

"Do you really want me to answer?" as she looked startlingly into the face of the approaching man.

"Yes," she said in a low tone of voice.

He held out his hand toward her. She placed her's within it.

With his eyes yearningly telling his love for her, he drew the unhappy woman to him and in a moment more she was in the strong man's arms. Clasped and firmly held by him, Williard Gordon kissed lips that had been touched by but one other man.

He felt the heaving breast that had known the

impress of only her husband. She lay in his arms with fast falling tears. He felt her sobbing until her body trembled.

"My answer is that I love you, Mildred," he said at last to her.

"Oh, Mr. Gordon, I know I offend, in my wrong doing; but my desolate heart was all alone in the solitude of suffering," she cried out.

And Mildred Hanley was but a woman after all. But dear reader, while there is no effort at defense of her surrender to the overtures of Willard Gordon, let me ask for the sake of mitigation of the punishment you would give, at least that you view the extenuating circumstances that should speak for the unhappy woman. With a love for a man capable of the noblest of all sacrifices; that had concentrated itself upon the man of her choice; that had made her bear children for him, she had felt that love scorned and trampled upon, stultified and cast aside. She had seen her husband turn from professed love and depart from her breast of purest affection and convert it, through the wiles of wicked womanhood, into a debased worship of another. She had seen the desertion of herself and their newly born. She had felt the breaking and shattering of her heart into many pieces. She was alone, unhappy and unjustly so—desolate and miserable!

She had yearned for an awakening of her own dead heart. She had sought to reform the broken fragments with the love of another. Her heart was left with the great unoccupied voids that desertion

had created. She, like most women had sought sympathy. May I not ask that some leniency be extended by you as you hear the woman's side?

After this meeting between Mildred and Gordon, there were many conferences between them. They continued to meet as before and had seen much of each other.

On the Tuesday just preceding Xmas they had met at a practice meeting, and he had told her that he would see her at her home on Thursday evening, as he was to be out of town on Wednesday. This remark was evidently overheard by some one, as the succeeding chapters clearly show, and was doubtless responsible for all that happened afterward.

# CHAPTER XIV.

## THE AWAKENING.

MYRA KILER was of that type of woman, by no means new to the world. From time immemorial, her counterpart has been a frequenter and marauder upon the highways and high seas of society. Whether bandit or pirate, disguised in the garb of respectability and armed with those deadly weapons, the charm and beauty of face and form, she has ever been the prototype of the alluring candle flame, around which circle the human moths, that are eventually drawn to their irresistible doom. With access to the domain of her victims made easy, by reason of the weakness of man and actuated by her cruelty of nature or design and aided by her abilities as an actress, she has been enabled to make most liberal contributions to the unhappiness of all time. Wherever found, whether despoiling the home or scuttling the bark of love, the accomplishment of progress by her in her slimy and sinuous way, never fails to lay bare and bleeding once happy hearts as the results of her well plied vocation of infamy.

Though of varying types, whether in pursuit of gain for herself in the form of money, rank and station, or whether being guided by the wickedness of depraved heart, or whether unconsciously by means of mere flirtatious methods, she finds her pathways

made always less difficult by reason of the frailties of man in his great egotism and vanity upon which she always preys. For it is the truthful commentary and observation, that her conquests are more often found to be the result of the great confidence that man has in himself rather than his confidence in the opposite self. Long ago, woman learned that her charm of beauty and form could be used as meshes of the snare, that has never ceased to be prepared for the unsuspecting and susceptible man and it is equally true that such a well set trap has seldom failed to catch and hold man as a victim. A woman is endowed with great faculties for knowing and measuring man and concentrates her powers upon the weakness of his armor, accordingly. She knows him better than he knows himself, while, he, upon the other hand, knows but little of her and less about himself. While justice would demand an equal distribution of censure in cases of the unlawful or unholy loves of man and woman, yet, after all, woman becomes the sculptress and man is the pitifully pliable piece of clay with which she works.

When once fettered by such women, men become subserviently submissive in the imagined fervor of their idolatrous affection. Though conscious of being forbidden and of all of the unhappiness entailed, man will love without stint. He will kneel at the feet of the temptress, though he knows he is scoffing at honor, duty, love and law. He is enabled to see the falling tears of the deserted one and all the happiness that has been destroyed; and yet, he will turn and

rush to the arms of the siren, listening to the purring and practiced accents of pretended love, and give renewal of his promises of devotion to his destroyer.

Such was the enthralldom of Paul Hanley, and such was the character of the woman at whose feet he worshipped. Coming always at her beck and call, he had become a most useful instrumentality for her own welfare, at the same time, knowingly blighting and destroying the pure heart of Mildred Hanley. At times, he felt himself doubting the loyalty of the woman; and he began to suspect that she was receiving the attentions of other men. But, on such occasions, she easily would convince him to the contrary, with ingenuity of excuse and adroitness of falsehood. She had taught him that he must not ask her questions and that he must have confidence in her.

And along these lines, he had proven himself a most obedient pupil. He did trust her in all of his blindness and surrendered himself helplessly to his infatuation.

When too late, poor Paul's eyes were finally opened. About two weeks before Xmas, he had suggested to the woman that he would reach D. on a certain night when he would see and be with her; but she had shrewdly excused herself from the appointment by telling him that she and her mother intended driving to a neighboring town upon a visit to a friend where they would witness certain church exercises. Paul, not only acquiesced in her arrangement, but rather took some pride in the fact that she

should become interested in anything pertaining to church affairs. With well feigned regret, she had stated to him that she would forego her trip, however, and see him if he insisted.

He had been deceived by her willingness to meet him, and had promptly refused to permit her being denied the pleasure of the trip with her mother, and had told her that he would continue his work upon the road on that day.

When they parted, however, she had appealed to his vanity immensely by making him promise that he would not go to C. his home on the following Sunday. Receiving his assurance that he would not, she had told him good bye with great affection, kissing him time and again.

For some reason, on the day before she was to drive to the village to witness the church ceremonies, Paul concluded to go to St. Louis in connection with the affairs of his house. He remained the next day, and was busily engaged with other members of the firm at their place of business until a late hour during the night.

Upon leaving the office of his firm, he had gone directly to the M. hotel, where he was accustomed to stop, and being tired, had gone to his room where he soon fell asleep.

The next morning, upon arising and dressing himself, he was in the act of opening his door into the hallway, when he sustained a very severe shock that he was not prepared for.

With his door partially opened, he heard a voice

that was very familiar to him. He remained within his room a short time and heard the door across the hallway from him being closed and afterwards, a man and woman walk down the hallway toward the elevator. Very soon afterwards, he followed behind the couple, reaching the elevator landing just as the pair had entered the elevator. The face of the woman was now turned toward him.

Paul looked into the face of *Myra Kiler.*

When he faced the guilty woman who had apparently been selling herself to him body and soul, her gasp of astonishment and bewilderment, indicated her great embarrassment and discomfiture.

His one glance at her at that time was his last. When he reached the office floor, he immediately went to the clerk's desk and looking upon the register, to see who had occupied room 400 across from his own room. This is what he found:

"G. Brody and Wife."

He needed no further information. Though somewhat slow in being finally educated upon one certain question, he was suddenly made to really know the woman who had been so surely dragging him to his ruin.

The vampire had succeeded in extracting all the life-blood from his happiness and had left him a dishonored man; and now with the love of his wife gone, his own love prostituted by reason of contact with the wiles of this woman and his self-respect gone forever, with the infamy of the adventuress before him, he looked long and silently into the dark and gloomy

picture of the past that he had made, by reason of straying from the virtuous love of Mildred.

As he walked away from the hotel register, he at once saw the helplessness of his position revealed to him and sat down in the first convenient chair in the rotunda of the hotel. There he sat motionlessly gazing ahead of him, seeing nothing and perfectly unconscious of his surroundings. He did not see the constant stream of patrons of the hotel passing by him. He was lost in the greatness of despondency which was now overwhelming him. The false hopes which had cruelly led him on in his love for Myra Kiler, crushed with the revelation of her falsity, had at last revealed to him the enormity of his weakness and there lay before his vision his complete and unhappy undoing.

With his brain racked, in an attempt to muster mental strength that would enable him to face his disaster, he surrendered himself, with undrawn sword to the helplessness of most awful despair. Following in the footsteps of the many who had gone before and who have been surrounded with overpowering conditions of sorrow and adversity, he sought the nearest bar, where he endeavored to drown, but where in fact, he intensified his sorrows.

Hour after hour Paul Hanley sat at the table in the saloon, and not mindful of the presence of others, pouring glass after glass of strongest liquor from the large decanter before him upon the table. Eventually reaching a stage of intoxication which called the attention of waiters to his condition, he gradually

sank into drunken insensibility, letting the glass fall from his lips in an attempt to take the last drink, his head pillowed upon his arm as he fell over upon the table.

He did not know the next morning how or when he had reached his room at the hotel. When he awoke he found himself stretched upon the bed without having removed his clothes. And now when he arose and staggered across the room and stood before the dresser he beheld a most wretched appearance so utterly unlike his former self.

In a moment there flashed across his mind the events of the day before. His first thoughts of Myra Kiler were those of more than loathing, contempt and hatred. Supplanting any recollection of her came visions of his home where he imagined he could see Mildred and his little children. His heart at last began to beat and flutteringly carry him to the little home his absence of manhood had wrecked and despoiled, as his anguish overwhelmed him and merciless remorse reproached and punished him.

Finally, as he stood gazing upon the tortured and troubled face before him, contemplating the great sea of troubles that resulted from his own conduct, with the knowledge that after all there remained but small semblance of the one time Paul Hanley, his face spelled despair. Confronted by the saddened and tear stained face of Mildred the mother of his children, he beheld the fast gathering tears roll down his face, being overcome by the terrible mental anguish and torture that had at last come.

With unsteady steps the miserable man returned to his bed and gave himself up to the hideousness of most awful suffering. Sick in body by reason of his dissipation and with the attendant nervousness naturally following, he lay for hours brooding over the troubles that seemed to multiply as time wore on.

What could he do now?

He knew that he had no right to even ask, much less expect Mildred to take him back to her heart after he had so ruthlessly broken all the promises he had made.

Perplexed as he was in mind, unable to determine what course to pursue, after recovering from his dissipation, he had taken to the road again, a changed and thoroughly saddened man. For days and days thereafter he visited his patrons with but little interest in his business and with his mind and heart always taking him back to the home that he had dishonored. He eventually, however, resolved that he would return to Mildred, the thoroughly penitent and remorseful man that he was, humiliated in all of his shame, and throw himself at her feet and plead in most manly spirit for the forgiveness he feared could never be his again.

It was approaching the end of the year and he had expected taking his final visit to St. Louis and make arrangements for the coming year, before the holidays. So, finding himself in the southern part of his territory one evening, he determined to return one Wednesday night and see Mildred and his children on his way to St. Louis.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE TRAGEDY.

WHEN Mildred was aroused from her sleep about one o'clock that night to let him in the house, she found Paul apparently elated upon seeing her as he embraced her at the door. She could see and easily discern less evidence of worry than heretofore and her own heart was lightened by infection from his own affections and enthusiasm of feelings. There was for the time being an awakening of that old time love for Paul, and when he had finally given way to heaviness of deep slumber, Mildred found wakeful hours before her, as she lay by her husband's side. As each minute and hour slowly dragged by, it was with many a sigh and countless heart throbs, before she finally closed her eyes in a most welcome slumber. With indisputable evidence of the faithlessness of Paul having been long ago secured, she yet felt the aroused anger of her womanhood toward him. And, yet, ought she not make the final effort to forgive once more? Must she, even now, turn to him and with tender embrace encircle him with her arms and tell him that she had forgiven him? Did not the face, the eyes and the voice of little Aldine command her to do so? Once, she had

even put her arm over her sleeping husband, as her love for her children impelled, but before he was awakened, she could picture the mistreatment she had suffered from his hands. She could hear too, the voice of Willard Gordon, telling again of his love. She could recall the letter which she had found in Paul's coat-pocket not many months before. She withdrew her arm.

The next morning, as they arose, there was the same indifference of feeling of past months. They were courteous. He was solicitous, even. He commented upon her apparent lack of sleep, but she professed no inconvenience. As they sat at the breakfast table, Aldine came running into the room and sprang into her father's lap. Yet as that cold December morning was cloudy and forbidding without, so it was within,—the same barrier. Mrs. Andrews, in her feeble way attempted to lighten the situation, by playfully teasing Aldine and by attempting to start a conversation for all of them. But it was a fruitless effort. They were each yielding to the intensity of unhappiness that comes to outraged womanhood.

Paul had remained at home during the rest of the day until he was ready to go to the station to take his train. He had spoken to Mildred about his absence, for a few days. Upon being interrogated as to when he would return, he had told her that he would come back Saturday in plenty of time for the Xmas celebration. He had even been jubilant in spirit, and time after time, had sought to draw her into extended conversation. He had kissed her once, as she was

standing by the fire place. She did not resent his overtures, but he could easily see that his attentions were not invited. He could not, however, summon sufficient courage to again ask for her forgiveness.

Reluctantly, Mildred accompanied him to the station, and as they walked down the street, went with him into the post office, where Paul received some mail, which had accumulated. This he did not even open, but put into his overcoat pocket. Before they started from their home, it had begun to snow, and as they reached the station, the increasing storm had mantled everything, with its white covering. As they went upon the inside and looked out, it was easy to be seen that a heavy snow would fall.

It was some fifteen minutes of train time. Paul and Mildred were standing upon the inside of the waiting room when suddenly she saw Willard Gordon pass the window. Paul did not see him. Shortly afterward, Mildred complained of illness and Paul had taken her to the outside. Her illness was by no means feigned. The cool air, however, soon restored her, and by the time the train rolled into the station, she had entirely recovered her composure. As the train pulled out from the little station, Paul had kissed Mildred fondly, and sprang upon the steps of the last car. Standing upon the platform of the train, he looked back and saw Mildred. He could see that she had put her handkerchief to her face, and that she was crying. He was wondering why. A fellow salesman and an acquaintance of years, had observed the conduct also, of his wife.

"Ah, Paul, my boy," he said, "if I only had some queen of a woman to shed a tear for me, when I am to be gone only a few days, I would be the happiest man in all the world."

And so the vanity of this man came to his rescue. Was it possible that Mildred was hiding her real feelings from him and that after all, she was so anxious for him to return, so sorry for him to go? The suggestion more than pleased him. He even smiled into the face of his friend, his pleasurable pride. Deeply conscious of his many indiscretions and escapades and of his confessed betrayal of his wife, yet there was a man's inherent weakness that so ensconces him in his own egotism, that he could forget all the crimes he had committed against her love for him and satisfy himself that her tears were because of her deep love and because of her longing for him to return.

Self-satisfied as he was, Paul had taken a seat in the coach and had begun to open his mail.

His first letter was from his house. It caused him great pleasure. In recognition of his highly appreciated services, his house had proffered him an increase of salary to the extent of $1,000.00. So pleased was he, that he had handed the letter containing the news of his good fortune, to his friend, McFarland, saying:

"Read that Mc."

The next letter which he opened did not contain such pleasing information. The first effect of reading, was that the smile was driven away. He

read it again! His friend, McFarland had returned his letter and was congratulating him upon his good fortune. Paul did not even hear what he said. Again he read his second letter. It was an anonymous letter, dropped into the post office at C. It was all poison and this was what he read:

"If you would take the trouble to watch your house Thursday night, you will learn of your wife's infidelity."

As usual, such communications are signed, "A friend."

How strange, indeed, how strange it is that the poisoned arrows shot from ambush by the hidden foe, scarcely fail to strike the intended victim. A man would resent an imputation cast upon some one near and dear to him and would refuse to believe his best friend if such information should come from such a source. He would disbelieve, and for that reason, real friendship has often hesitated its proffer, knowing how difficult of belief is such information. Yet, let the serpentine hiss be from the dark, and observe its immediate trail of mental disaster. The crime committed of sending such a communication, while the author puts himself in hiding to await the intensity of wounds inflicted, is not lessened because the truth may be told. He is the footpad of all society, who delights in the suffering and woes of others, always preying upon the misfortune of others and without gain except the pleasure of causing suffering and sorrow. The offender is found to have and wear many disguises. He is the author of, "I

heard," and "They tell me" and of "I don't believe it, but I heard." It is the usual parasitic cowardice that we encounter throughout every avenue of life, that is ever breathing and breeding trouble and that never accomplished anything but wreck and ruin.

Paul had crushed the letter in his hand. The indignation that comes from manliness and trust, made his face livid with rage that any accusation should ever be made against Mildred. How he would crush the miserable wretch who dared to breathe aught against her. He knew the extent of his own depravity. But Mildred, the mother of Aldine and their little baby? How cruel! For a few moments his great confidence and belief in Mildred, calmed him and he felt the nobility of the impulse that impelled disbelief. But he found himself ill at ease and disturbed. He walked to the other end of the car and back. Try as he did, he could not drive away the effect of the letter. Why should any one write it? Was the author an enemy of Mildred or himself?

The train was now nearing a little station called Range, some ten miles above C. The snow storm was increasing in fury and it was rapidly growing dark. The whistle was blown for the station and the train was coming to a stop. After taking aboard a few passengers, it had started to pull out. Just as the conductor had boarded his train, Paul jumped from the car upon the north end of the platform. He had a small suit case with him. This he took to the store of a friend and customer. He remained in the store house for some time engaged in

conversation with the store keeper. At about 8 o'clock he suddenly left saying he would go to the little hotel across the railroad, and remain for the night.

Paul, however, in a few minutes was walking down the railway track toward C. The intended mission of the letter writer was accomplished. He had resolved to return to C. and he did not intend that he should be seen as he went.

The falling snow had now become several inches deep and there was no evidence of its soon abating.

As he walked down the track, surging through his mind, were the many varied and conflicting emotions, to which he had never before been subjected. At times he would grow cold, and then again, with the stride with which he walked, he would find himself perspiring with his effort. Now and then, he felt the mortification and shame that came to him, because his long and lonely walk was dishonoring Mildred, whom he knew to be guiltless of every wrong.

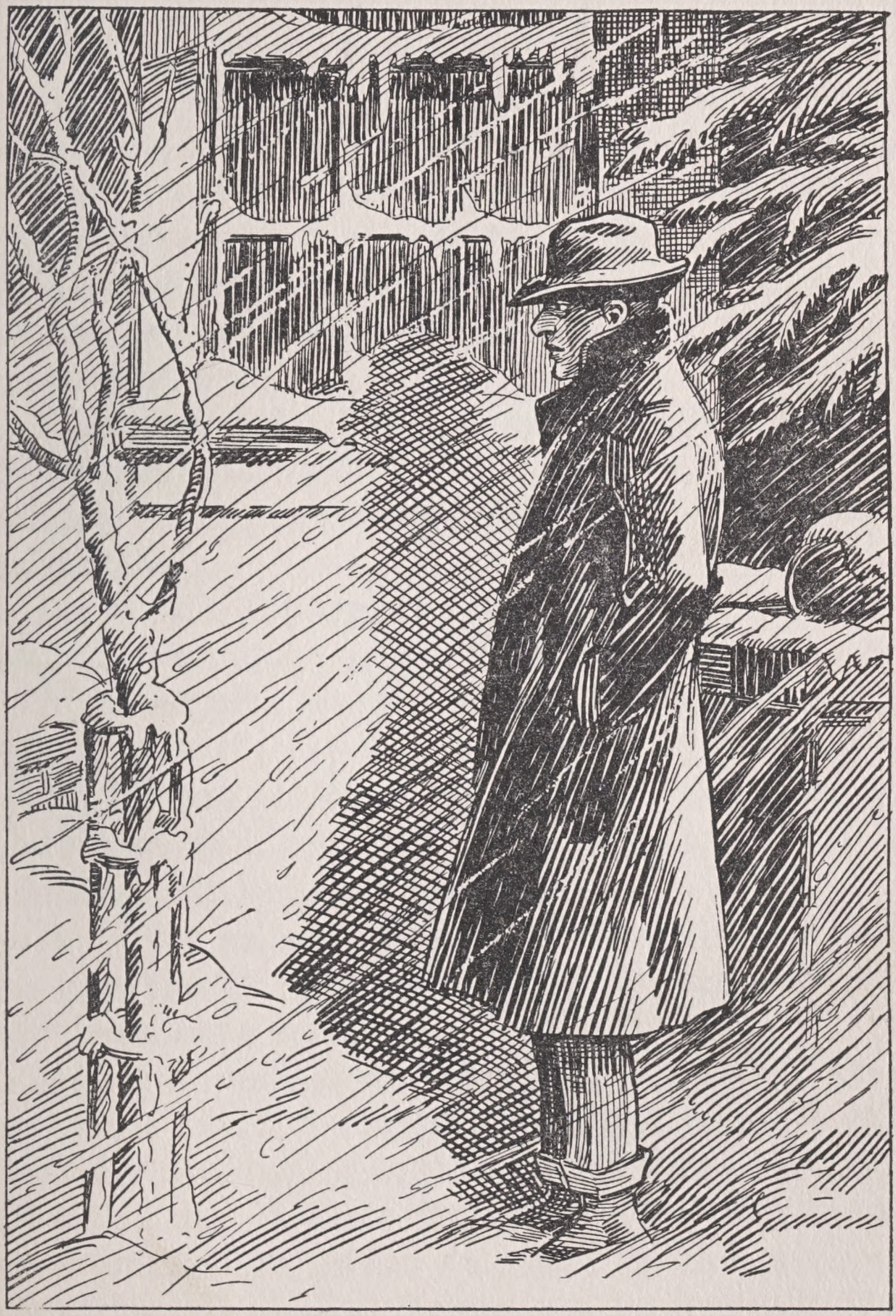
Then he regretted his determination to return. But he walked on. His heart was heavy and his mind mad. More than once he found himself clutching the pistol which he had secured at Range. At times he fancied the snow was becoming very deep and that he was becoming very tired! But when he thought of the letter and vividly saw its contents, he would renew his efforts with quickened pace.

He had ample time to revolve in his mind many of the events of the past that had become darkened shadows, he fain would dispel. Through them all,

he saw the innumerable errors of the past few months of his life. As he looked back he cursed and blamed himself and those who had contributed to his misfortunes. He berated himself that when once he had secured the forgiveness of Mildred, that he did not profit by the mistakes that he had made and have led the life she was entitled to expect of his promises. Ah yes, he knew it all but too well, now! But when he reached her tonight, he would tell her his heart was still true, and she in the goodness of her own heart, would forgive him again! He would not tell her his real reason for returning; but he would tell her that his heart had impelled him to do so. At the time of such thoughts, the words of the letter would appear in larger letters than before!

It was now about midnight. He had reached the outskirts of C. Here, for the first time, he stopped since he left Range. He could go on down the track and stop at the hotel for the night, and banish from his mind every evil thought and suspicion of Mildred engendered by the poisoned letter, or he could take a roundabout way, and reach his home without observation. Distrust dictated the way; and within an hour he reached the rear of the home where he once knew happiness to reign.

He passed through a rear gate and cautiously approached the house. All seemed dark and quiet. No sound could be heard and as he looked up to his wife's bedroom, there was no light to be seen, which caused him to again upbraid himself for his cowardly and dishonorable conduct. He stood on the porch



He felt sure that he heard the voice ot a man within.

near the kitchen where he was protected from the falling snow and debated as to what he should do. Having no key he determined to go around the house and boldly ring the bell at the front door. Having so concluded, he started around upon the east side of the house toward the front porch.

He had gone but a few yards, when he halted. Did he and could he trust his own eyes? Did not the snow blind him?

Was there not a light coming through between the curtain and the window casing upon the inside of the window of the downstairs bedroom? He could not be mistaken.

He walked through the snow so that he now stood near the very edge of the window.

Must he also doubt his sense of hearing, or did he not hear the cry of a little child within?

No, he was not deaf. He heard the voice of their little baby as it restlessly cried. He heard, too, the unmistakable voice of Mildred.

But what he now heard, froze and riveted him to his very tracks. He felt sure that he heard the voice of a man from within.

Beside himself as he was he knew he could not be mistaken. And yet as he stood there by the window with the fast falling snow covering him—with quick beating heart, strained nerves and throbbing temples, he attempted to reason in behalf of the mother of his children, and yet his senses, he knew had told him the truth.

From being dazed and benumbed in mind and

body, he became quick in perception and action. The blood began to course rapidly through its every channel. With quickened breathing, wildly beating heart, his whole being quivered. He now reached into his pocket and clutched the pistol he had secured before he left Range, and with a stealth that was unnecessary, he hastily returned to the rear of his house. He tried the window of the kitchen. It was securely fastened.

Running to the barn in the rear of the premises, he procured a long chisel and returned to the window. With this he soon pried the window open. In a moment he was upon the inside of the kitchen. From there he passed through the dining room and on into the hall leading to the door of the room from which he had seen the light and where he knew the voices came from.

With pistol in one hand, he knocked upon the door with the other.

There was no response. He knocked again and repeatedly. He pounded viciously and loudly.

At this time he heard the voice of Mildred

"Who is there?" she asked.

"It is Paul," he answered, "open the door."

"Why, I thought that you went to St. Louis," she stated rather than asked in a trembling voice.

"I did start but my train was wrecked. Let me in, Mildred. I tell you to let me in." His voice was now choking him with the fury of the anger he felt.

He no longer demanded admittance, but threw his

full weight with all of his strength against the door. It yielded and flew open with a crash.

There was a dim light burning upon a table in the center of the room. By its light he could see the form of a man approaching as if toward the door, where he stood.

Paul rapidly fired three shots at the approaching figure. At the second shot his victim fell with a groan to the floor. Twice more did he attempt to discharge the weapon as he stood over him. The pistol failed to fire each time.

Without even turning in the direction of Mildred who had fallen upon the floor with hysterical scream, he held the lamp in his hand, which he had turned up, and looked down into the face of the groaning and dying Willard Gordon.

He stood for but a moment and after replacing the lamp walked to the front door and out into the stormy night.

Just as he was walking out of the room, Mrs. Andrews, who had been aroused by the shots, came down the front stairway.

"Oh, Paul, tell me, my boy, what has happened? What have you done?" she pitifully asked him as she saw the pistol in his hand. He never answered her, but pointed into the room he was leaving, with the weapon.

After he had left the room, the mother went into the bedroom. By this time Mildred had sufficiently recovered after having fainted away to rise to her

feet. As she did so she was in the act of going to the wounded man as her mother entered. She bent over him and taking his head in her hands she entreated rather than asked:

"O Willard, tell me, please tell me that you will not die. Speak to me. Oh, do speak to me and tell me that you will live."

Willard Gordon was only partially attired. He had on his shoes and trousers, and his coat and vest were upon a chair near by. Mrs. Andrews was quick in observing this.

There was no occasion for any explanation.

There lay the dying man and over him she had seen her dear Mildred with dressing robe encasing her. The story was too plainly told. The pale and ashen face of the aged woman bespoke the misery of her broken heart. For the moment she stood gazing upon the scene as Mildred rent the air with scream after scream.

Suddenly, she sprang to the chair upon which was hanging the coat and vest. Grabbing them in her hands, she rushed to the side of suffering Willard Gordon. With almost the strength of a man, she succeeded in pulling them on to the limp form of the dying man. As she did so, her hand came in contact with blood flowing from the wound just under the heart. She knew nothing now, but the great love years had given her toward the unhappy Mildred beside her. In her way, she was vainly thinking and attempting to shield her from all the public shame she knew must come. Futile as was the effort, the

mightiness of her love gave and asserted its unerring attestation.

Taking the little child from the bed, where it lay crying, she for the first time spoke to Mildred.

"Come Mildred we must leave this room. Come I say Mildred, come." Her voice was almost a command.

Mildred was following her and they had just stepped into the hall, with Mildred giving vent to almost incoherent expressions and alternating with the violence of her screams sounding throughout the house, when the front door was opened and men came running into the hall. They had heard the screams of Mildred and had hastily run across the street and into the house.

"What has happened, Mrs. Andrews?" asked one of the nearby neighbors.

Mildred attempted to speak but her mother spoke in advance.

"There has been a terrible tragedy here. Willard Gordon has been killed by Paul," she answered. As she had done so she succeeded in getting Mildred to follow as she led the way to the upstairs, little Aldine meeting them upon the stairway. As much as she could, the good woman was keeping Mildred from saying anything and succeeded in getting her into her own room upstairs.

The crowd now rapidly began to pour into the house.

Medical aid was hastily summoned, though it was evident that Gordon was mortally wounded. He was

unconscious as he lay upon the floor and continued so during all the time he remained there, before being taken away from where he lay.

In the meantime, his father had arrived, and after a suitable ambulance had been secured. he was conveyed to his own home.

After the removal of the wounded man speculation began as to the whereabouts of the slayer. No one had seen him since he left the house after the shooting. Headed by an officer of the law, who had come upon the scene, a search was begun for him. After a thorough investigation of the rear premises and the barn and everywhere that he was likely to be found near his home, an hour afterwards, tracks half covered by the snow were found leading into a corner of the large yard. There was found a figure sitting upon a flower pedestal that could easily have been taken for a snowman, because of his motionless attitude, and being covered with snow. But when the same was approached it was found to be that of a man.

It was Paul Hanley.

There he sat, motionless and apparently without life, with his right hand hanging limply by his side in which he clutched the pistol that he had so recently used. Seemingly unconscious of his surroundings he paid no attention to the approach of the men who now surrounded him. At this time the officer, touching him upon the arm said to him:

"Come on, Mr. Hanley, and let us go down town." When he had been touched by the officer, he suddenly

aroused himself from his apparent lethargy and for the time seemed to appreciate his position. He turned to the officer with whom he was acquainted and said:

"Oh, Dan, why should I have come back! Poor Mildred. And so it all had to end this way."

Returning to him the anger that had prompted the awful deed itself, he interrogated the officer.

"And did he die?"

Upon being informed that Gordon was not dead, he had attempted to pull away from the officer, saying:

"Well, he *will* die."

He was prevented from going into the house by the officer and friends, and was persuaded to accompany the officer away from his home.

He was now under arrest for assault to commit murder and which soon was to expand itself to the charge of murder.

On the following day Willard Gordon died. His family mourned his death with great sincerity. For he was one of those generous and kind hearted men who not only loved his own people, but he had endeared himself to a large number of friends, because of his manly qualities.

The Coroner's Jury held an inquest on the following day and the jury had held Paul Hanley duly accountable for the death of Willard Gordon.

True, indeed, friends had attended the funeral ceremonies. But he had died in the shame that comes from detection, which is after all the greater sin in

the public esteem. Had he lived, doubtless, his voice would have been heard in defense of the unhappy love that had resulted in his death. But the public could see neither justification nor provocation for the unholiness of such a love. There was not even an extenuating or palliating circumstance heard in his favor. Public opinion rarely, if ever, disdains a kind word or thought in such case.

He died in expiation, because of being charged with crossing another's hearthstone. And yet while one half of the local ministry preached with sanctimonious pretense that "The Wages of Sin is Death," they forgot Paul had been charged with the same offense for which he had slain Wilard Gordon. At the same time, with great eloquence they had failed to criticise him.

# CHAPTER XVI.

## THE AFTERMATH.

THE little town was thoroughly shaken and rocked from circumference to center. What a rich morsel to be rolled under gossiping tongues was this sad tragedy! Men would hunt for comfortable and warm places in the little stores, where they would congregate and wisely discuss every angle of the case. The churches were all well attended on Sundays, with the hope of "hearing" something, either from the pulpit or upon the church steps after dismissal. Men would go home at night during the long winter months, and be greeted with: "Well, is there anything new about the case?" Wherever found, native or denizen, man or woman, white or black, it could safely be assumed that "the case" was being thoroughly discussed.

And, too, there was much discussion upon the part of women in a most industrious sense in every quarter.

There was a revival of the Women's Charity and Sewing Club. This organization had not held a regular meeting since the divorce suit of Smith vs. Smith with all of its scandal. Indeed, it seemed to be tacitly conceded and assumed by all of its members, that the organization had passed out of existence.

But when a two line local signed by Tabitha Smallwood, the president, was inserted in one of the local

papers, that there would be a called meeting for the following Wednesday, the seating capacity of the "Hall of the Rebeccas" was taxed to its utmost capacity.

There came the original charter members, those in good, bad and indifferent standing, the old and the young. In fact there were no absentees, except a few who had died or had moved away from the town.

The president stated that she had called the society together, feeling that conditions warranted a prosperous winter and because she felt assured there was a great deal of work ahead of them.

It was not long after this announcement, that the Women's Charity and Sewing Club got fairly started in an individual and collective sense, upon the *real* business of the meeting. To be sure they brought nothing to sew upon or with. That was not expected. The members of this society were "trained to the minute" as to their duties. They did not come to sew, but to talk about the Hanley case. There was the reading of the minutes of the last "regular meeting," and the announcement by the president that they "stand adopted as read." There was also a report from the indispensable "Executive Committee" that likewise was monotoned to the unlistening audience and which as is usual, was adopted without being scarcely heard. Some vacancies upon various committees were filled by the president. Some other routine business was transacted, much to the disgust of the large attendance, who seemed to regard the delay as intolerable.

There was a noticeable listlessness, however, and but little attention to anything transpiring, and the affairs of the W. C. and S. C. were not receiving the attention one would imagine. And yet, the very atmosphere seemed surcharged with great anxiety and interest.

When Sarah Haskins arose and with what seemed studied detail, pictured the wretchedness and misery that poverty had brought to the widow Ralston, not forgetting to detail her own great sacrifices to which she had been put, in assisting her, single handed and alone, and finally concluded her remarks with a motion that coal be furnished her to the extent of two dollars and fifty cents, there was a perceptible scowl upon most of the faces of the members, because of the time being consumed. But when the irrepressible Mrs. Goldine arose and pointed out that there were only two months more of winter and "opined" that the widow could get along with $2.00 worth of coal there were groans,—not because of the economy being practiced, but because of the unnecessary consumption of time. After some comment, however, there was a compromise, resulting in the widow getting coal to the extent of one ton which cost the sum of $2.25. The vexatious incident being closed, there were many sighs of relief.

Mindful of the importance of the moment, as well as her position, the president now declared:

"The club will be at ease for fifteen minutes."

The coveted time had now arrived. The breaking of that awful and oppressive silence, by the unbridling

of well exercised and industrious tongues, was now to be an accomplished fact. As if unleashed wolveriness coming up with their fallen prey helpless and exhausted before them, they now began the lashing of the unraimented soul of poor Mildred.

They had come, many of them, for that purpose. They had come to be in at the finish. And whatever may have been said as to the failure of Paul Hanley to have readily killed Willard Gordon, they were become pacemakers as to the time they required in order to make their dagger thrusts into the soul of the desolate woman. And now, with practically an even start, they at last began—to talk. You could scarcely term it a chorus of voices,—and too, there was not exactly a Babel of tongues. They all understood each other fairly well. There were some whispers and there were sneers. There were some hisses and a few tears. They were all horror stricken! And too, they were shocked! Some few, with great *civic* concern, spoke with dignity as to the very great stain and blot upon the community—and, then too, they were sorry indeed, because of the stigma upon the dear little children. Oh, so sorry!

They repreached with much fervor, the sermon "The Wages of Sin is Death," that had been heard at many of the churches some few days before. They improved upon it to some extent, however, and included the woman in death's toll. There was censure without stint for immorality and the lack of virtue in womanhood—bitter excoriation for the dead man and no sympathy for the woman.

When the commanding voice of their president, Tabitha Smallwood was heard giving her views upon the situation, by common consent, silence reigned. She had been engaged in conversation with other members who were exchanging their sentiments and had been sitting down. She raised her voice as she talked. When she saw the respectful audience being given her, she arose and continued to talk, as she turned to the members. Among other things she said:

"But just to think of it! This pair paraded themselves in disguises, so successfully, that we actually permitted them to be received into our *very best society*. And when I think how that dear old Presbyterian church has been profaned by letting them sing in the choir, it really grieves me beyond expression! How that wretched woman and debased creature could ever have had the nerve to have imposed herself upon decent people is more than I can understand. For *my* part, if I had been Paul Hanley, I do not see how I could have let *her* escape. I certainly sympathize with Paul and I trust that he will be liberated. And that old woman! Did you ever hear of such a thing? Why, they say she actually put the man's coat and vest on him in order to make it appear all right for her daughter, right after he was shot and before any one came. That would make her as bad as her daughter. Isn't it awful?"

There was actual handclapping in approval of Tabitha's utterances.

The affair had now taken on the form of a general

discussion and there were kindred expressions from various members.

But there was never a word of kindness or sympathy for Mildred.

Yet when it seemed that sentiment was wholly created and crystalized against her, there came the unexpected and undreamed of. Pandemonium almost reigned, when the aged and much loved wife of Dr. Larkin, who had been always the family physician of the Hanleys, arose to her feet. She had been a listener to all that had been said but had taken no part in the remarkable discussion. There were tears in her eyes as she arose and slowly turned to face her audience.

"Well," she said with trembling voice both from age and emotion, "I have been sitting here, listening to all that you have had to say and I hoped that I could at least hear one kind word for the suffering girl up the street yonder, that we all used to love so dearly. But I hoped and listened in vain. Now bless all of your hearts, I do not want to hurt the feelings of any one of you, but it does seem to me that this is a strange charity organization and a stranger charity that we are now practicing and preaching. As I listened, I knew that one thing was true; that there were very many of us who have forgotten the picture of the blessed Saviour, who with one hand upon the head of erring Magdalen as He forgave her, and the other staying the mob that would stone her—and who there said: 'Let him who hath not sinned cast the first stone.' Why not let

us drop the stones we would throw and pray for the girl in all of her misery, and ask that the same dear Saviour may forgive her with the same charity we ought to extend to her?"

As the noble hearted woman sat down the tears were streaming down her face. Quiet came over the room. No greater could have been the consternation. The silence became painful. No one saw fit to attempt to make an answer or make any response to what she said. There was nothing to be said. Tears and some shame could be seen now, upon the faces of many who had been so bitter. The restraining power had been gentle, but it had been very effective. Good old Mrs. Larkin had called off the pursuers from their victim.

Mrs. Parthena Powell, who was the parliamentary whip of the society, came to the rescue and relieved the embarrassing situation.

"I move that we now adjourn," she said as she addressed the president.

Without one dissenting voice the motion prevailed. There was no other avenue of escape open. And so the W. C. and S. C. was then adjourned, amid great confusion, after having given *one ton* of coal to widow Ralston and after being prevented from throwing *many tons of stones* at Mildred.

The glorious handiwork of the Deity, in woman's creation has ever been the acknowledgement of all time. The tributes of time to her, have been without cessation. Centuries have attested her goodness and virtues and yet the truth has never been half told. A

companion for the loneliness of man,—with graces and charms that ever endear and endure; with hearts that can beat true, and hands that have long learned the gentleness of all charity; commanding influences that blaze and pave the way for the purest of all Christianity; she, whose heart pulsates with the tendrils of a love that has molded manhood into the greatest of attainments; she, whose maternity sends thrills into the goodness of the posterity of all time, —what pedestal is there so great or so high—and what esteem sufficiently exalted in man's mind, that can ever give just meed or measure of praise to woman?

And yet the anomaly of her very being is found in her tyranny and unkindness toward her own sex. Whatever her capabilities, the commentary of time has been and is that she will ever stone a sister who appeals to her as the fallen Magdalen. Ready to ever overlook the transgressions of man, yet her exactions of her sister become the extended cruelties that make it so hard for the fallen woman *to bear bravely her own cross of shame.*

Long after midnight of the day of the meeting held by the W. C. and S. C., a certain man was seen to stealthily emerge from the side door of the residence of Tabitha Smallwood. Her husband happened to be out of town on that occasion. She was letting her *friend* out of her house, after a whispered "good night," whom she had been entertaining.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### CLOSED BLINDS.

THE blinds of the Hanley home had been pulled and kept down since the night of the tragedy. To a person, passing by, there were no signs of occupancy of the large house, except the smoke to be seen coming from the chimneys. The grocery man and other tradesmen made their usual trips to the rear door, it is true, but aside from Dr. Larkin there had been few callers. To most of them the servant had made the excuse of the illness of Mildred. But there had been a few loyal friends who had not failed to come with loving hearts and words of comfort for her, among them Dr. Larkin's wife.

The pitiableness of her position had, day after day, become more distressing to her. She had suffered and for many days endured a most serious illness. Indeed, such a change had come over her, that she had become haggard and unduly nervous. Doctor Larkin had been called there at the very beginning and he had closely watched her progress, fearing, seriously, for her mentally. With sleepless nights through which she had gone, and the intense mental strain through which she was passing, her condition at times was most serious in the extreme.

She was not permitted to be alone for any length of time whatever. Her every move was vigilantly observed by the competent nurse procured by the doctor.

Throughout most of the time her mother was at her side. The remarkable courage manifested by this more than mother resulted favorably upon Mildred. From the moment of the firing of the first shot by Paul, she never indicated the slightest symptom of yielding to the great strain upon her both in mind and body. When there was occasion for alarm as to her daughter's condition, there was present all the wonderful strength that her character of mind could command. She had kept both of the children always near their mother, knowing the effect of their presence.

Mildred had pillowed her head upon her mother's breast through much of the time that had elapsed. There, she sobbed out her misery and awful anguish. Few words were spoken by either of them as to the events that had taken place. None were necessary. The very souls of both of them were darkened pictures of all that had taken place.

Once only when Mildred had seemed to, and had become frantic as to the torture she was suffering, had Mrs. Andrews made reference to the killing. It was while Mildred with her arms around her mother, was berating herself.

"Why, oh God, why can I not die? Why should I suffer more?" she moaned.

"Oh, my dear daughter," as her mother gently

caressed her, "you must now summon all your courage to forget and ask your kind God to forgive. Look into the faces of little Aldine and the dear baby for whom you should live."

Many times did the mother come to the rescue with her unbounded love and give comfort. The influence of such a love proved to be essential to the assuaging of Mildred's grief.

Desolate and unhappy Mildred! Miserable and heart-broken woman!

What awfulness of horrible suffering could have been greater than hers!

How terrible had been her awakening!

Friends all had gone! Torture! Suffering! Agony!

Now, as she looked back over but a few years, she could recall her young womanhood, when the world smiled at her. When she was good! When she was pure!

How she had loved Paul! How he seemed to love her!

She saw herself as the happy wife and loving mother. She saw their three years of happy wedded life coming back to her as if yesterday. Her heart ached, even now as she first learned of Paul's waywardness. How the estrangement came and grew!

She could hear the explosion of the pistol!

She no longer could see justification. She had sinned against the world and her God, she had thought she had loved.

It was during the days of continued gloom and

despair that overwhelmed her and while she was suffering with her sorrow that the pastor of the Presbyterian church called to see her.

The aged minister, Dr. Eldred, had for more than a quarter of a century, been loved by his congregation. And his kindly goodness of heart more than justified their affection. He was one of that kind of men, whose sacrifices and devotion to their life work, call for and receive the admiration and esteem of all who come in contact with them. His head, heart and hand joined in the preaching and practice of all his sermons.

He had known Mildred from her early childhood. He had seen her grow into the bloom of beautiful womanhood. He had always loved the girl as if his own. And she had grown in his kindly esteem. She was always willingly active in his church and charitable work whenever he needed her.

When news came to him of the killing of Willard Gordon and its cause, the good man had yielded to a genuineness of intense grief for Mildred. Neither, really desired to see the other, but he was following what he conceived to be his duty, though a sad one.

When she learned that he was coming up the stairs, her face prepared itself with its every blush of shame to meet him. And when he came into her room, her eyes shrank from meeting his. Of all, she dreaded meeting this good man most. For a moment she hesitated. But when she heard that kindly old voice again, she threw aside all effort at resistance to her feelings and ran to him.

"Mildred, my dear girl, your old pastor and friend has come to see you," he said as he approached her. There was no criticism in either voice or words. Upon the contrary, there was sympathy,—there was friendship; there was encouragement and cheer.

The beautiful woman fell upon her knees, and as she took hold of the good man's hands, lay bare her bleeding heart with tears. In this posture, she remained for some moments. He stood over her, and as the tears came to his eyes, he placed one hand upon the head of the kneeling woman.

How great are the accomplishments of a little kindness! Just a tear only of genuine friendship, perhaps! Behold how it can wash away weakness of despair! Can give courage and cheer, when most needed. Its attainments though bloodless, are real triumphs of humanity. His gentleness had touched her heart.

"Oh, good Dr. Eldred, how can I bear it! How can I look into your face and want to live! How unworthy I am to ever come near you. You, who have always ben good to me! Dear, dear old friend, you and mother are all I have left. I need you now more than ever," she said between her sobs.

Gently the old minister raised her from her position and with his arm around her, led her to a chair.

"Mildred," he said, "I have come to tell you I am still your friend. I have come to tell you, even in your darkest hour, you must not lose courage. I want you to come back to the One I know you used to love. I want to tell, you, He sent me to you, to say that He is waiting for you, now. You must remember his en-

treaties. He bids you to cast aside the memory of your error, and come to Him! He is your best friend and will not forsake you. His arms are open to receive you, Mildred, and you must come back."

His voice and heart were speaking at the same time. She knew that there was sincerity in what he had said. And as she looked up into his eyes, she felt for the first time some strength given her.

"But I can never face the world! I cannot stand my shame. How can I ever greet those who have believed in me and have been kind to me?" Her voice and her questions showed she was receiving encouragement at his hands.

"You must face the world. Your penitence and contrition of heart will bring forgiveness that will make you brave. There will be sunshine for you, where gloom and sorrow now prevail. Live for Him. Live to love Him again. Only ask Him with your heart and He will forgive."

The words of the pastor were simple but reached her heart.

He remained for some little time talking to Mildred. He made no direct allusion to the homicide, but talked kindly in advice which he gave her.

When he finally told her good-bye she again held on to his hand. She pleaded with him to come again and he promised.

When Dr. Eldred heard the front door close behind him as he went out, a sad smile came over his face.

He knew that Mildred would be won back to Him.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### IN THE TOILS OF THE LAW.

PAUL HANLEY'S friends were numerous indeed. He not only had friends who were loyal to him because they really felt kindly toward him but there were many who had great affection for him. When he found himself beset by all of the troubles and sorrows which were calculated to call forth his greatest courage, he now found these friends coming to his rescue. They came to him not only for the purpose of consolation, but to cheer him, and to encourage him with advice and financial assistance which many proffered him. There was no gain-saying the strong entrenchment of friendship that he found himself behind.

When his firm first learned of his trouble they were quick to tender not only their friendship but their assistance. They had even gone to the extent of employing an ex-governor of a neighboring state for the purpose of defending him, a lawyer noted for his eminent successes at the bar. The selected attorney who became the chief counsel of Paul's case had advised the employment of the very ablest lawyers in the county of Paul's residence for the purpose of assisting him. This had been done. In fact, there remained but a few lawyers in the county who were

not engaged in some manner in his defence. Among others was the very able and eloquent Judge Marion Young, the real nestor of the local bar.

In the following weeks, the attorneys and friends of Paul had busily engaged themselves in a preparation for his defense. Fortified as he was and being supplied with all necessary finances, there was nothing left undone. And as the time of the convening of the May term of the Circuit Court approached, it was apparent that the defense would be ready for trial and that no continuance nor delay would be asked for. Numerous witnesses, principally physicians, had been supoenaed in behalf of the defendant. Many of them were somewhat eminent in their profession. A few noted alienists had not only been consulted but had been secured from the cities of St. Louis and Chicago. The profession of the witnesses made it apparent as to what the defense would be.

That it would be claimed that at the time of the killing Paul was temporarily insane was the generally accepted theory of the defense.

Upon the other hand the state of I—— through the State's Attorney had secured an indictment for murder, and although the Circuit Judge had admitted the defendant to bail and he was accordingly given his liberty, after furnishing bail in the sum of $50,000.00, there was a determined preparation being made for the purpose of prosecuting him for the crime for which he was indicted. While the father of Willard Gordon had employed assistance for the State's Attorney in securing the services of a

young lawyer, there was no other effort put forth than to secure and present all evidence obtainable as to the details of the homicide.

Long before the sheriff had made his usual proclamation at the east window of the second story of the court house, at the county seat of the county, every available seat in the large court room had been eagerly taken possession of by the many who were interested in the now celebrated Hanley case, that was to be called that day.

It was the first Monday in May, the time fixed by law for a regular term of the Circuit Court of that county.

As was usual in those days, the court houses in small county seats, were situated in the center of what was known as the "Court House Square." Around the large yard was the typical iron fence and on the outside of the fence came the stone pavement and at its edge was the continuous string of hitching racks that extended entirely around the yard itself. These were constructed for the farmer who would come to town for the purposes of attending court or on other business. Upon occasions of great importance or somewhat unusual, and particularly upon Saturdays, every foot of space was taken upon all sides of the "square" by the nickering horses and teams hitched to various vehicles. Here, throughout the entire day, it was by no means an unusual thing for the teams to remain, without being fed or watered, while their owners, in many instances, were quenching their thirsts in some nearby saloon. And

not infrequently it happened that kindly officers were compelled to hunt for and find the owners of suffering animals that remained standing the whole day regardless of the weather.

The court house was constructed with the evident intention of providing for the farmers, And in those days, the system in vogue of the country "Squires" composing Boards of Supervisors for the county who had the entire fiscal affairs of the county under their control, the court houses were constructed under the actual direction of the citizen from the country. He wanted his court house constructed for his convenience. He wanted the court room large enough to accommodate any large gathering of the Grange, the Populists or any other political organizations—for rallies and the gathering of the clans of any order or organization. They believed in commodiousness rather than comfort. For that or other reasons, the court room at M. had a seating capacity of something near 1,000. Doubtless the farmer reasoned that in as much as he was in a great majority as to votes cast, juries required, and as to business transacted, it was his prerogative to so construct his home of justice as he saw fit. For it was then true, that most of the litigation in the small county seats came from the agricultural elements.

The usual and average gathering on court days found nothing in particular to interest the stranger. To be sure there were litigants with their witnesses, who with girded loins and well buckled armor occu-

pied many seats in the court room, ready to give battle to an equally armed opposition. Many of the lawsuits arose over controversies as to hogs and cattle—division fences and property llines, and now and then a slander suit. At that time, litigation was considered more in the nature of a luxury than a necessity. With trifling disputes over property of slight value, and with bad blood engendered, litigants from the country, with their rival bands of witnesses, would cause their disputes to grow to such an extent that their witnesses had become young armies before the final termination by juries of feuds started. Malice, just as is still the case, with contentious dispositions, served more to furnish and increase the patronage of the country lawyer than any other influence.

Indeed, the author recalls very vividly a certain law-suit that was originally tried before the "Squire" involving an old sow of about ten dollars in value, where the plaintiff won. An appeal was promptly taken to the County Court by the defendant and from there the case was appealed by the plaintiff to the Circuit Court. There were several witnesses at the beginning. They had grown in number until the entire neighborhood of the residence of the sow eventually became the witnesses upon one side or the other as to her identity. The witnesses came in droves—and they swore too, "jest as straight as the crow flies." Finally, after some three years had elapsed, a jury decided in behalf of the plaintiff, and awarded him

the sow. But she had long since become disgusted with the delays of the law and because of not knowing to whom she belonged, and had died more than a year before the last trial. The costs amounted to over $800.00, and the lawyers' fees had run up into more than a thousand dollars.

But there were other spectators there than litigants. There were the grand and petit jurors. Then, too, there was the typical loafer that you will find in a good seat by the stove in the winter and by the window in the summer. There was to be found also quite a number of the professional jurors, who are hoping that lightning might strike them in the event that bystanders should be summoned after the regular panel is exhausted. This element is always on hand. He knows how to answer questions upon his "voir dire" so that he can qualify as a juror in any conceivable case. He never formed or expressed an opinion upon any case or event, however, important, and according to his answers would make an ideal juror. Often he was some employed henchman who was there, because some lawyer expected to make up a jury from the bystanders in order that the lawyer could be sure that *justice would be done.* A large portion of the audience was made up, of course, of the morbidly inclined, who hover around the court whenever trials afford anything along lines of the salacious or sensational. In fact, there were some women (twenty-five or thirty) who had gained and were determinedly occupying some of the front

seats, many of whom had come from C. the scene of the tragedy. They had come early, and had brought their lunches with them, in order not to lose their coveted places of advantage.

Every preparation had been made by the court attaches for the convening of court. There was more than usual activity and bustle manifested. The clerk of the court swelled with great importance. The sheriff and his deputies were particularly active. The sheriff was suave and engaging in his manners and fearing some of his country constituents might accept some of the many invitations to bring their families with them and come to his home, if "you are ever taken on the jury." He had extended such an invitation while a candidate in the campaign before his election, and one good farmer had brought his entire family with him and had literally camped at his house at a former term of court when he was a juror for three weeks. Anxious to perform his duty as an officer he was likewise on the lookout so as to avoid a repetition of past hospitality. But when the court ordered him to make the usual proclamation convening court, he did so with much pretence of voice and manner, informing the public that the Honorable J. Court was now convened pursuant to adjournment."

# CHAPTER XIX.

## THE TRIAL.

AS the court now took his seat upon the bench, the lawyers began to rapidly assemble within the bar provided for them. And as the talented array of counsel for the defendant took seats at the table assigned to them, it was evident that Paul Hanley had prepared to fight desperately for his life and liberty. As he walked into the court room and within the railing, he was beside the leading counsel for him, Gov. C. P. Jones from a neighboring state. It was apparent that he was undergoing a great mental strain. His face was pale and he wore a pronouncedly haggard look. There were dark rings under his eyes as if he had not slept the night before. Of necessity, he was nervous and ill at ease. And it could easily be seen that a change had come over him. As he would sit conversing with his lawyers, he was serious minded in appearance. The smile was all gone and there was no doubt as to his having perceptibly aged.

State's Attorney McElroy and his employed assistant, Thomas Fountleroy, had just entered the bar and had taken their seats as the court rapped for order. There had been subdued conversation throughout the court room but now instant quiet pre-

vailed and an air of greatest expectancy was apparent. The court, disposing of a few motions in civil cases, took up the matter of charging the grand jury and the empanelling of the regular petit jury. Upon this being done, the court for a short time looked over his docket and then suddenly called:

"The People of the State of I—— vs. Paul Hanley. Mr. State's Attorney, what do you say for the People?"

"We are ready for trial," announced the State's Attorney.

Judge Marion Young immediately arose and replied for the defense by saying:

'The defendant is also ready, if it pleases the court."

Then began the tedious labor of selecting the jury. The entire day was consumed, the regular panel being exhausted. Only two of the panel qualified and they had been challenged peremptorily by the defendant. At the conclusion of the day, a special venire was ordered by the court for 100 talesmen, and on the following morning there was much material to be worked upon.

It was evident that the prosecution was endeavoring to secure as many young men as possible who were married, and it was equally plain that the defense was desirous of getting as old married men as they could upon the jury. Juror after juror was interrogated, a very large number disqualifying themselves by reason of having formed and expressed

opinions as to the guilt or innocence of the accused. When a juror qualified that was not entirely acceptable to one side or the other, there would invariably follow an examination in an attempt, always, to secure his removal for legal cause. The great number of jurors examined, by reason of formed opinions, clearly showed that the case had been very generally talked about througohut the county.

Finally, at about the close of the second day, the jury was secured, after a great deal of caution being exercised by both the prosecution and the defense. The jury was taken from various walks of life. Some were past middle age (five or six), the remainder being young men. There was one merchant, three miners, one clerk, and the rest were farmers. It was an average jury from the standpoint of intelligence and satisfaction with them was expressed by each faction.

State's Attorney McElroy was an experienced prosecutor and was known for his splendid abilities as well as his incorruptible integrity as an official. He was a very popular official, not only with members of the bar but with the people generally. He had fearlessly performed his duties and was serving his second term. In so far as preparation could be made, he had given the case at bar his most earnest attention and the counsel for the accused had good reason to fear him.

So when he arose to make the opening statement to the jury his every word was closely listened to.

He began by first reading the common law indictment for murder. His manner of reading, as well as his statement to the jury, was a most solemn and impressive performance. When he read the indictment with all of its awfulness of technicality and among other things, "That the defendant, Paul Hanley, then and there being *instigated by the Devil,* did wilfully and feloniously, and of his malice aforethought, make an assault upon Williard Gordon, a human being in the peace of the people, and did also then and there, with a certain pistol then and there had and held in his right hand, which said pistol was then and there loaded with certain leaden bullets and gunpowder, fire and discharge one of the said leaden bullets into the left side of the said Willard Gordon, then and there producing a mortal wound upon the left side of the said Willard Gordon, from which said wound he, the said Willard Gordon, did then and there languish and languishing did die," very close attention was paid by the defendant, and he slightly bowed his head as the prosecutor continued to read.—After much legal verbiage, consisting of many "thens and theres" and some "wherefores" the indictment finally concluded by saying all that it would seem necessary to be said;—"and so the grand jurors on their oaths aforesaid, do say and charge that the said Paul Hanley did then and there kill and murder the said Willard Gordon, contrary to the peace and dignity of the State of I——." To the layman, the uniqueness of the law's technicalities must be a great problem as to the necessity of the same when a given thing can be said

in one line in ordinary language and be as intelligently expressed as where the law's parlance would require more than a page. But the technicality of the law is the robe of the judge and the coat and vest of the lawyer, and neither time nor reason have ever seen fit to deprive them of the apparel they have so long worn.

Now, as the prosecutor finished reading the indictment, in clear and concisive tone and sentences, he told of the lives of the defendant and Mildred; how he was away from his home most of the time; that he knew of the attentions of the deceased to his wife. He told over the objections of the defendant's counsel, that he had become a most notorious libertine and how—he had a mistress in every hamlet of his territory. To this, the court sustained objection, saying that if true it would not be admissible as evidence. When he turned, however, and pointing his finger at the defendant saying, "and Gentlemen of the Jury, I will prove to you that Paul Hanley knew that the deceased would be at his home on that night and that he had been so informed before he left C. He went to Range and then made up his mind to return to his home and deliberately kill and murder Willard Gordon," Paul turned away from the prosecutor's gaze. Objections were made by Governor Jones, but McElroy more than held his own and evidently made an impression upon the jury as he concluded.

Upon the conclusion of the opening statement the introduction of evidence immediately began.

The first witness called was Coronor Taylor, whose

evidence concerned the character of the wounds received by the dead man. Either of them was necessarily fatal, and there was no doubt in the mind of the witness, who was a physician, as to the cause of the death. There were two gunshot wounds inflicted, one at the upper part of the stomach and the other immediately underneath the heart. When asked by the defendant's counsel as to the clothing of the deceased, he produced the same which was significantly and with great concern, shown to the jury.

*There were no bullet holes to be found in either the coat or the vest.*

There were blood stains strongly in evidence upon the inside of the vest, but not of a bullet having gone through the coat and vest.

It was evident that the defense would attempt to make much of this fact. Upon interrogation the witness gave it as his opinion that the clothing *had been put on the dead man after he was shot.*

The State's Attorney sought to have the witness say that the shots could have been fired while the vest was opened and unbuttoned, but while admitting the possibility of such a thing, thought it unlikely that such could have been the case.

When George Gordon, the father of the deceased man was next called, every eye in the court room was turned to the sad-faced man who unsteadily took the witness stand. Grief had left its impress of sorrow upon the old man and as he related, with trembling voice how he had been called to the home of the defendant and had found his son unconscious and

dying upon the floor, tears slowly came to his eyes. Only once during his narrative did he look in the direction of Paul, who slowly turned his face away. That was when he answered that Willard had died the next day without coming to consciousness.

The witness was asked to identify the clothing of his son by the defense, which he did, with bowed head. He could not recall whether the vest was buttoned at the time he first saw his son, but he was positive that it was on him when he was taken from the scene of the shooting. He subsequently saw that there were no holes in either coat or vest when the deceased was taken home.

When the State's Attorney said: "Mr. Sheriff, call Mrs. Andrews," there was instant attention upon the part of every one and an air of expectancy on all sides.

With consideration for her feelings, the State's Attorney had allowed her to remain in the private office of the sheriff until called as a witness. It was quite evident as she appeared coming out of the sheriff's door, that unusual interest would be created as to the testimony it was expected she would give. As a matter of fact, Mildred was the only eye-witness as to the actual killing. But in view of the fact that she was not a competent witness to testify under the law, either for or against the defendant, she was not only not present but her version of the homicide could not be taken. Mrs. Andrews, while not actually having seen any part of the tragedy, was yet a witness to that which transpired immediately afterwards.

As she slowly walked to the witness stand after being sworn and took her seat, it was plain to be seen by all who knew her that she had suffered intensely. Though a woman of more than sixty years of age, time had dealt kindly with her up to the fatal night of the tragedy. But now there were deep lines indicating furrowed care as shown by the drawn countenance. Indeed, she appeared to be rather feeble. Upon taking her seat her eyes wandered until she was looking into the face of the defendant.

As she faced about and told what she knew about the tragedy, there was no venomous spirit shown but rather did she reluctantly and sadly relate all that she had seen and heard. It was when she narrated how she had taken Mildred to the upstairs of the home, that tears began to crowd themselves into her eyes. For a brief period she silently wept, but recovering herself, she continued her testimony. Deftly the State's Attorney had led her into detailing the home life of the defendant. She was permitted to relate how happily they had lived together until a certain incident arose at which time there began to be a change in both of them. She related how Mildred's heart chilled toward Paul when she had learned of his faithlessness to her. She told how when time after time he had been accused by Mildred, though first denying it, had admitted his guilt, and how Mildred had forgiven him upon his promises for the future, but how afterwards, he was again and again confronted with his broken promises as to Myra Kiler and how in the end she had ceased to love him. Once

during her testimony, with an outburst of tears, she drove terror into the heart of the accused by saying before she could be interrupted:

"And if Paul could have only been true to Mildred, he would never have lost her love *and he would never be here, to-day.*"

The statement was stricken out by the Court as being improper, but it was a hard blow to the accused, for it was clearly to be seen that the jury had been affected by it.

The cross-examination was with much deference and consideration for her feelings. Indeed, aside from having her state as to how Mildred was attired at the time she had gone into the presence of the dying man, and that she was wearing a robe she was accustomed to wear, there was but one other subject about which she was interrogated.

"Now, Mrs. Andrews, will you state how Willard Gordon was attired when you reached where he was?" she was asked by Governor Jones.

"He had all of his clothes on," she answered with some feeling.

"Did you notice as to whether his vest was buttoned at the time you first reached where he was?" she was then asked.

"I do not know, and did not notice." Her reply came in a manner showing her annoyance.

"But my dear madam, is it not true that his coat and vest were not upon him when you entered, and that you yourself put them upon Willard Gordon?" she was asked.

Governor Jones advanced toward her at the time of propounding the question. He had scarcely finished the inquiry when the witness gave way to tears and hysterical sobbing. Her answer was not coherent or a pertinent one, for she merely sobbed out:

"You are trying to besmirch my poor girl. You are heaping shame upon her to free Paul. It is not fair to her and I will not answer."

Shrewdly, the question was withdrawn by Governor Jones and she was permitted to stand aside. As she stepped down and continued to yield to her feelings, the effect upon the jury and spectators was noticeable. There were but few dry eyes to be seen.

She was defending her child and had made the sacrifice that love will call for. The enormity of her offense had not in any sense deterred her. And though there were few who believed her, all were willing to excuse and defend the love that could dare, though she had done wrong—had violated the law of man and God.

But was she the first one whoever had used a love to defend?

No sooner had Mrs. Andrews left the witness stand than there came the announcement the prosecution would close its case. The prosecutor felt that the psychological moment had arrived and though there was other unimportant evidence available, he preferred to close.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE DEFENDANT TESTIFIES.

UPON a hasty consultation being held by the defense, the accused was at once called to the stand.

There was the usual craning of necks of spectators who had come for the purpose of merely hearing the sensational details that led up to the killing. That the defendant would be required to tell every fact and circumstance about which others knew nothing, was well known and now the front seat of curious and morbidly inclined women and others similarly attracted, awaited the defendant's testimony.

The defendant answered with composure, as he began his evidence. He answered the questions of his counsel simply and directly. When he gave an answer he immediately stopped. There was no voluntary statement made by him. Though clearly to be seen that there was nervousness that he felt, yet he made an impression upon the jury that throughout he was merely speaking the truth. There was no bravado, but upon the contrary, he merely gave evidence with the frankness that the truth required.

He began with the happiness of his married life. He told the jury of his great love for Mildred. He detailed how great had been his own and as he thought her own happiness and love for him. That he had built the costly home in which they lived from the plans substantially furnished by her. Step by step he told of their married life and of how great was their joy and happiness when little Aldine, their little girl came. As he would speak of his wife, he would always call her "Mildred" and once when speaking of their wedded life, tears came. They were genuine, too. Everybody could so see and understand. He told how on the night before the tragedy, he had come quite a distance out of his way in order to be with his little family before going on to St. Louis—of how Mildred had accompanied him to the station the next day—as to how proud he was of her—how they went to the postoffice together, where he had received considerable mail.

"I saw her standing on the platform as my train had pulled out and I saw her put her handkerchief to her eyes as if crying. I did not know why, but I thought it was because I was going away from her for only a few days. As God is my witness it never occurred to me to doubt Mildred before. Never did the slightest suspicion come to me of her. My last words to her were that I would be sure to return by Saturday and I meant it. I remember, sitting on the inside of the coach. I opened some of my mail and began reading it. I had a letter from my house that gave me much pleasure, informing me of a raise of

my salary. When I opened the letter you now hand me and read it, I was at first inclined to laugh at its absurdity and to treat it as a joke. But somehow, I could not get it out of mind. I grew restless, and by the time the train reached RangeI had made up my mind to get off. It was snowing very hard when I left the train. I remember in a dazed sort of way of my starting back to C. I walked down the railroad track all the way. I did not see anyone but a tramp who tried to hold me up. I made him walk back with me. More than I can tell you, I felt ashamed of myself for doubting Mildred and once or twice I had almost determined to return to Range for that reason. But I kept going and finally about 12 o'clock I reached the edge of C. I turned away from the streets and walked in a round about and circuitous route toward my home. I did so because I did not want anyone to see me, it is true. I reached there about 1 o'clock. I went to the rear and entered through the rear gate and went to the porch, where I stood protecting myself from the falling snow. I had seen no light from Mildred's window and had convinced myself that I was guilty of the greatest affront and insult possible, that I had allowed myself to have doubted her because of an anonymous letter. I determined that I would go boldly to the front door and ring the bell and go to her and upon my knees would tell her my wrongs to her and ask for her forgiveness for all the unhappiness that I may have caused her. I started around the house upon the east side and had gone as far

as to the east window of the down stairs bed room when I thought I noticed light streaming from between the curtain on the inside and the casing. I thought, however, that I must be mistaken, but when to my amazement, as I went close to the window, I learned that there was no mistake. I stood quietly at the window to see by listening, if there were any persons in the room. I was sure that I heard Mildred's voice. I began to wonder as to why she was occupying the room, as I knew she had always used the upstairs, when I should be away. I thought nothing seriously of the fact, however, until as I was standing there, I heard the voice of a man from within the room. I listened again and again and I knew that I could not be mistaken. After that I do not know how long I remained standing there. I do not remember very much as to what took place after that. I was not myself. I tried to convince myself that there was nothing wrong in what I had seen and heard. I tried to reason everything in behalf of Mildred and that nothing could be against her, but as I listened and heard a man's voice talking and her's in reply, my mind became confused—I became crazed—I scarcely knew myself. I stood there debating what I should do for sometime. I finally went to the rear of the house and after getting a chisel pried open the window and got into the kitchen. I went on through into the dining room and into the hall leading to this room. I remember when I reached the door it was locked. I knocked at the door. There was no answer. I must have pounded

heavily after that. It was then I heard the voice of Mildred. I demanded that she let me in. She wanted me to go upstairs and sleep, and was very much surprised that I had returned. I again insisted that she let me in, and when she would not I threw my weight against the door and burst it in.

I knew that I had a pistol with me. I have an indistinct recollection of having it in my hand when I went into the room. I remember seeing the form of a man as I entered. He seemed to approach me. He had no coat or vest on at the time. I saw Mildred standing near the bed. As I saw the man I raised the pistol and do not remember anything else, except that I saw Gordon fall. I immediately left the room and went out of the front door, hearing Mildred scream as I went. I do not know where I went and I do not remember anything until I was arrested while I was sitting upon the flower pedestal in the front of the yard."

In cross examination there were no changes in his testimony. It was perfectly clear to every one that the literal truth was being told by the witness. Again and again he stated that he had never had any intimation from any source reflecting upon his wife. He had casually known the deceased but had never known of any attentions by him to his wife.

"If I understand you, your relations with your wife were of the very best and most agreeable?" He was suddenly asked by the prosecutor.

"Yes," he answered, hesitatingly.

"As a matter of fact is it not true that for many

months before, your wife had become estranged from you on account of your intimacy with another woman?"

Immediately there followed a torrent of objections upon the part of the defense. The earnestness of argument upon the objection showed the importance of the question in the minds of counsel. The court after listening to the contentions made, sustained the objection of the defense.

But at this juncture, Paul Hanley sitting upon the witness chair, suddenly surprised his counsel by saying:

"Notwithstanding the objections of my counsel, I do not want to hide the truth. I feel that I must speak. I will not let my wife be placed in a false attitude, by myself. It is true that I had been guilty of all the things the prosecutor intimates by his question; and it is equally true that I had confessed the same to Mildred. I had not been what I should have been and had promised time after time to her that I would change my life. I did not blame her for changing her heart toward me. I was making an honest effort as I had promised. For God knows that I loved her. I do not claim to have been free from blame and I admit that my wife had frequently accused me justly of my own indiscretions. I have nothing to hide and will face all the consequences of my wrong."

The voluntary statement of the accused, to a very great extent, disarmed the prosecutor by reason of its manliness, for he could easily see that the jury had

been much impressed by the apparent candor of the accused.

Though consternation was at first created within the ranks of the opposing side, it began to be seen that the cause of their client had not been seriously injured, if indeed, it had not been aided by the sudden outburst.

In a short time thereafter, the cross-examination of the accused was brought to a close.

The defense now introduced numerous celebrated alienists as witnesses, to all of whom was put the hypothetical question based upon the testimony of the accused, as to whether in their judgment the defendant was of sound mind at the time of the shooting. They each without exception readily answered that he must have been of unsound mind at the time but in their judgment he had fully recovered. They based their judgment upon the suddenness with which he had learned of the faithlessness of the wife and of his being confronted in the manner that he was with the circumstances surrounding the killing. There was no change brought about as to the conclusions of the great number who had testified, if anything their testimony being made stronger by cross-examination.

There was no rebuttal testimony and the case was now ready to be argued.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE TWO ARGUMENTS

THE opening argument for the prosecution was made by Mr. Fountleroy, who had been employed to assist the State's Attorney.

Though not the experienced advocate as others employed in the case, his address was one of force and ability. He spoke with great earnestness and he was listened to with great attention.

He urged the jury to consider the value of human life as given by the Deity. He pointed out that the laws of both man and God inveighed against its deprivation, and for that purpose, there had been created barriers and restrictions thrown around its preservation to such an extent that with only a few exceptions, only He who had given it and the law of man had a right to take it away. Jealous, indeed, was the great Commonwealth of every life within its borders. The law was created for the protection rather than the destruction of it. Whatever might be the faults of the lowliest and humblest citizen, he had a right to its protection.

The enforcement of the law must be by means created for that purpose. The chaotic condition which would result to society, if the proper tribunals were not appealed to, would bring about most malig-

nant anarchy and confusion. Its justice was open and accessible to all, but its administration must flow from authority of direction.

"Surely," exclaimed the speaker, "no man has the right to take the law into his own hands and become judge, jury and executioner as the defendant in this case has done. The defendant has assumed the highest province of the law in his effort at punishment of Willard Gordon for the offense he deemed to have been committed against himself. He was not invoking the aid of any element of the right of self-defense, but was become the avenger of a wrong that he claimed was against himself and not the State. His wielding of the sword of justice was without the spirit of mercy, but was with all the elements of revenge and malice which had made him an impossible conservator of the laws of his State."

The speaker continued with much force to point out the elements of murder as he viewed the case and contending that the killing was the result of deliberation upon the part of the defendant, as was shown from his own testimony, finally concluding with an appeal that the dignity and imperial majesty of the law should be sustained and that the defendant should be punished as the law demanded.

There are public speakers whose individuality and appearance personally, enable them to really possess the power of magnetism. The trained orator, with all of his loquaciousness and assumed dramatic abilities, can never hope to cope with the mind whose native talents connect him directly with his hearers.

Few audiences, including juries, are deceived by rhetorical or declamatory outbursts. The successful advocate, especially in criminal trials, who would become an effective pleader, must be one who can eliminate the fee received and who can take the jury into such confidence that he can win their hearts first and their minds afterward.

Such a man was the aged and more than gifted Judge Marion Young, who had been employed by the defendant. More than 60 years of age, with only whitened edges of hair around his exceedingly bald head to be seen, with a face of greatest gentility and kindness and with a commanding figure and appearance, he at once became the object of greatest attention as he arose to make the closing address for the accused.

His portrayal of the lives of Paul and Mildred, from their courtship into their wedded life, his description of the happiness that was theirs and how it had been added to by the coming of little Aldine was artfully made. He told how Paul had proudly gone forth into the world with the knowledge of the pure love that he knew was his and how he had striven to build for the future in his own way for the happiness of his household.

Frankly, he admitted the mistakes of youth Paul had made. That when his errors of life had been mentioned, how he resolved upon the reform that he knew was due to the one who was the mother and wife—that he had reformed as he had promised—that his love for her had not lessened but had grown

—how time after time, when a great distance from his home, he would take long trips in order to be with her only a short while, so great was his love, and how he had thought he was fully forgiven by her, as he had determined upon a pure and upright life.

Among other things, he said:

"Far be it from me to defend even the susceptibility of youth whatever may have been the temptations that may have been thrown in his way. Upon the contrary, I have no word but that it be of censure for Paul Hanley, as he strayed into the ways of indiscretion. I am conceding the greatest of reprehensibility for him and I am not permitting myself to be led into discussion with the prosecutor as to what were his rights as compared to those of the unhappy wife, who is suffering so keenly at this very moment. There is never the right to do wrong. I resent the implied assertion that because unhappiness may come to either man or woman, even when driven to the very verge of desperation, that there is either excuse or justification to fall or sin. Let no ear be so attuned that it can ever wish to successfully hear from my lips that the world can ever rightfully give greater license or latitude to the man than to his helpmate. There is but one privilege and province for action upon the part of each of them. There is a great law of love that demands duty to each other and their God.

And as I stand here before you, pleading for this young father, I shall not ask you to consider him other than an heir to the usual foibles, faults and fancies that come and go with young manhood."

The speaker recounted all events before and at the time of the killing.

"When his heart brought him home on the Wednesday night before the Christmas day, it was because it thrilled with his love for her. Whatever may have been his mistakes, his anxiety to be reinstated in her favor made him the lover as of old. Coming to her and leaving her with the sincerity of trust and confidence that impels a husband to believe in his wife, he was on his way with eagerness for the return before that most beautiful of all days. He left her with never a suspicion or having a doubt enter his mind as to her nobility of character. And on that night when he lay by the side of the one whom God had so graciously given him, he had sunk into the untroubled slumber of an unquestioned faith in the mother of his children. And on the next day as he sprang upon the moving car, as the train pulled out from the station, it was with an undethroned love that he waved his fond farewell to the woman he left crying upon the platform of the depot.

"Severe, indeed, if justice is ever done, must be the punishment accorded the author of that mysterious letter. I leave for you the censure of the unhappy soul who could wish to be the cause of misery we have all been forced to see."

"But behold the change. Mark the transformation from trust and love to the awfulness of doubt! See the change from the mild to the mad man! Behold the frenzy, the fury and the accomplishments of fiendish jealousy! Do you not recall how as he

walked down the railway track that night, how one moment it was all love and confidence for Mildred, and the next all the intensity of suspicion? Do you not recall how he had bravely attempted to defend her against the poisoned letter? What, indeed, must have been the tortures of the miserable man as he plod through the deep snow, on and on until he reached the rear of his home about one o'clock that night!

"He stands looking up to the bedroom window of his wife. He sees no light. All is very dark. His breast heaves with a great sigh of relief, when he is now convinced that it was all a mistake for him to have come back. Doubt and dread suspicion are driven away. Relieved of his sufferings, you find him walking toward the front door, with lightened heart.

"But you must stop with him as he sees the light streaming through the window of the downstairs bedroom. Now, from restored confidence you must turn again to torture of mind. You must stand with him at the window. There, in the cold and with the falling snow you must listen as he did, and hear the voices of the loved ones—the child and the mother—*the wife*. You strain your ears and you listen again! You hear the voice of a man in conversation with the wife. And after you have stood there, convinced as to all that you hear, you must know that his blood surged rapidly through his veins; how his heart beat fast and his mind went mad, when he knew that *another was in the bed chamber of his children's mother*.

"Then you can learn how reason can run riot and how the brain bulges into maddened awfulness of real insanity.

"Do you not see, that with the fury of the tiger turned loose he springs through the window of the kitchen nad rushes to the door of the fatal room? Do you not hear the husky and choked voice of the maddened husband as he calls to the one within that he really loves? Do you not hear the terrific blows as he pounds upon the door demanding admittance? Do you not hear the voice within, pleading her surprise and for delay as to opening the door? Watch as the athletic man throws his weight against the door and as to how it yields! This was not a man! It was man become a fiend. But when the door flew open, gentlemen! Oh the horror of it. The unspeakable terror of mind and heart that came in one dread moment! How can you forget it?

"There stands a half-dressed man; a short distance away is the *wife and mother.*

"If any human mind can withstand such assaults upon it and survive, it is stronger than God-given.

"If Paul Hanley were not crazed, surely every vestige of reason *left him then and there.*

"Mad and infuriated and with his brain on fire, he shot that he might kill. *You* cannot *blame him. He had a right to kill.* This I hold true whether *he was sane or not.* What would you have done? In what condition would your mind have been? I will grant you, that there was the act and fury of the maddened avenger. Outraged manhood had succumbed and

there could be no expectation that reason could longer rule. *He had seen the very fire of the grate of his home flicker and fade forever away.* He had seen love die. He had seen the curtains drawn for all time against the light and sunshine of any happiness for him.

*"Yes, poor Paul Hanley was justly insane.*

"My zealous friend, the prosecutor, has told you that Paul Hanley should not have taken the law into his own hands; and to use his own expression, he 'should not have become judge, jury and executioner.' He has reminded you that there is and was no law that could have justified the killing; and he defies me to make answer.

"My young friend, perhaps, is of the opinion that Paul should have awaited the coming of the December day and have applied for a warrant before the Justice *for disturbing the peace,* and he has urged with great declamation that the dignity and majesty of the law should have been sustained.

"This great imperial commonwealth of I—— has stretched forth its innumerable arms in every direction, seeking to protect its citizenship—the high and the low—the rich and the poor, all alike. And whatever the enactment of its laws, the fireside of the home is the great fulcrum of power and the foundation of its every provision. With us, the great justice of our laws, enables whoever is wtihin the mansion or castle, the hut or the hovel, whatever may be the station in life, to become the lord and master of the home, and

the right of protection against invasion of the intruder, is pre-eminent."

"When the thief steals under the cover of darkness of night into the home, and with catlike tread and stealth, finds his way to the cupboard, however unpretentious, and reaches his hand to the shelf, and takes therefrom a small piece of earthenware, the owner has a right to shoot the invader down, as he would steal his property.

"But when some interloper, while the master and husband may be absent, with persuasive tongue and manner, ingratiates himself into the favor and heart of the loved one who is left at home, and who watches and awaits the departure of the husband—and then under cover of darkness, just as does the burglar, undertakes to cross the hearthstone and drive away the sunshine of happiness that ought to be his, and seeks to purloin the love of wife and mother, we are then told by the prosecutor that we are not to take the law into our own hands.

"Since when did the small cup and saucer, under the laws of this State *become more valuable than the happiness of the firestide?*"

Eloquently and effectively did the able lawyer continue his plea to the jury with argument and sentiment that seemed to find lodgment in the minds of both jury and spectators.

The defendant sat with his head bowed throughout the address. Once or twice it could be seen that he was shedding tears, when the speaker had spoken of the love of Mildred being taken away from him.

Indeed, upon this occasion, as well as many others, there were few eyes without tears.

When Judge Young had concluded his address to the jury, and Robert McElroy arose to make the concluding argument for the State there was a tenseness of interest indicated by everyone that hushed the audience into almost breathless silence. There was no discounting the remarkable effect of the great orator's effort upon the jury. The most enthusiastic admirers of the State's Attorney felt doubtful of his ability to successfully counter the argument made. And yet, with his known prowess as a prosecutor urged on by the friendship he had felt for Mildred, whom he had known so well as she grew into womanhood, those who were nearest to him confidently expected a strong excoriation of the defendant as well as all possible defense of the tortured woman. And they were not disappointed.

With his splendid abilities experience had given him, he arose, grandly meeting the great genius of his adversary. From the very inception of his reply, he was listened to with marked interest. He spoke deliberately and earnestly throughout, and his words fell with conviction upon his hearers. Time and again did he deliver most merciless blows that made the defendant and his counsel wince with their telling effect.

He detailed step after step of the accused and portrayed with burning sarcasm his conduct as that of deliberation that belonged to one contemplating the death of another. He charged him with efforts of

secrecy attending his every act, with executing carefully laid plans as did every other criminal. Instead of righteous indignation he had employed the stealth of criminality in mind and had sought to excuse his act by feigning absence of responsibility.

At one time during his speech he suddenly cried out with most dramatic skill and intense fervor:

"Ah, it is attempted to interpose the makeshift defense here, that this defendant was insane at the time of the unhappy taking away of the life of Willard Gordon. Do not allow yourselves, gentlemen of the jury, to be deceived by a pretense so utterly foundless in fact and under the law. His attorneys do not believe in the hollow mockery of such a defense. They feel and know that even *you* will not seriously counetnance such a disguised evasion of the law. They are trusting that you will accept what is tacitly held out to you as an excuse for the taking of human life and that you may read through the lines that they are relying upon this mysterious and mythical defense that is so often adopted by guilt, known as the *unwritten* law. They are asking that you may so far forget your oaths that you may liberate the defendant because of the sentiment with which they seek to chrystalize the defense made to the effect that a man has the right to protect his own fireside."

"But they dare not openly advocate to you in the presence of the Court that such is their contention, for they would promptly be told that there is no such subterfuge available to them in this case. So I am asking and demanding in their presence, that they

speak out and in your hearing tell me if that is their reliance. You will observe that as I pause for reply, I am greeted with the silence of cowardice that betokens the fear to seek the open. And if I ask with equal candor, if they rely wholly upon the claim of ingeniously manufactured insanity, you are confronted with the same failure to reply."

"If you will only analyze the truthfulness of the claims of the accused, you will find that Paul Hanley is made by his counsel, the *avenger* instead of the *defender.*" Once, he said:

"I know that it has ever been the liberality of the world that a man is allowed the undue liberties of the libertine, with full consciousness that there shall be condonation for his wrongs as he returns to the one of his choice at home. I know, too, that as man expands his own liberties and licentious privileges, authorized by the teachings of the world, that he correspondingly exacts more of his own household and erects impressively high standards of virtue for the guidance of the wife he should love.

"It is, too, that same hypocritical cant of the world that educates criminals that they may go out upon the highways of life and become the despoilers of virtue, desert the pure affection of the wife at home who is left in all the desolation of despair, and if, forsooth, she should turn in the loneliness of her misery and unhappiness and endeavor to cement the broken pieces of her heart with the sympathies of another, that such men under the pretence of indignation, shall be entitled with loaded gun to avenge the stepping

across his hearthstone *of his happy home* by another. Then, as the smoke of the pistol clears away, the slayer is permitted to come into the court room hiding behind the cloak of insanity and asking for his freedom at the hands of a sentimental jury."

At another time, with eloquence, he cried out:

"I am not apologizing for the dead man, whose life was taken by this defendant. I am not seeking to justify the erring wife, who has stabbed her own heart while in the throes of desperation, and who must look out upon the gloomy expanse of her unhappy future, but if I must descend to the low level of the defense in this case, to combat even the claims of the disguised defense of the *unwritten law,* since when did justice ever so hide her face with blushes of shame, that this defendant should be heard to claim the right of taking the life of another to whom his own wife had been driven with the broken heart through the infamy and desertion he confesses in your presence! I protest with all the fervor of the friendship I had and yet have for the sorrowing girl, whom I knew so well, against the destruction of the picture I have in my mind. How well do I remember, and the accused has told you the same, of the beautiful young wife, the sweet-faced mother, one of the purest and best of women, serenely happy with the great love she was giving to this defendant! Picture, if you can, the loyalty of the heart she had so gracefully surrendered to him in all its entirety, the confidence she so willingly imposed in him as time after time her lips met his and as she would fall into his

arms with embraces of love, as he would come and go to and from her! Think, if you can, of a really happy wife and mother, being deserted with a scorn for her love, with perfidy and infidelity as his stepping stones of the life he sought when away from her! Conceive, if you can, of the countless tears that fell when this girl wife was suddenly confronted with his later love for another! Let your manhood make you kneel in worship of the princess of love as she forgave his confessed betrayal of her! I entreat you and I call upon you, Paul Hanley, to go back to the time when with promises of reformation, there was given the sweet hand and heart of a forgiving love, and when you rushed to the arms so soon afterward, of another. And oh, the promises that were broken! When poor Mildred Hanley awoke to the realization of his renewed desertion of her, then there was enacted the first tragedy in the lives of husband and wife.

"Then, Paul Hanley, you committed your first great crime! For you had deliberately *killed and murdered the love* and devotion of as pure a love as was ever God-made and you stabbed to the death her heart with the falsehood and treachery of another love! Her heart fell at your feet broken into many pieces and every glorious and beautiful dream of happiness perished in the mire of her misery!

"This was the kind of woman that the invisible world would ever command to forgive. *This* was the crime against womanhood, that the *world* has ever sanctioned. *This* was the *happy home* you

were so *insanely* defending. And now, as we listen to the scenes of the tragedy being related, we are permitted to behold the many feminine spectators who occupy the front seats in this court room daily, rush up to the accused at every recess and shake Paul Hanley's hand with dreamy-eyed fawning that has made of him the hero of the hour! This, then, is the education which the world gives! The decrees of this most munificent and accommodating Unwritten Law are such that this defendant, in case of acquittal, would be received and worshiped as he should pass through the door of this court house, by the populace just as if he returned a conquering hero. But what of Mildred Hanley? There is no handshake, no smile, no word of cheer, no consoling thought which she can ever have. Shunned by her own sex, condemned and crucified, she can only await the doom the world in all its cruelty has in store for her.

"With most admirable tact and skill, my friend, Judge Young, has pictured the right of the lord of the manor to shoot down and kill the burglar who would steal the most valueless piece of earthenware from his cupboard. So, he would under the laws of the State, because it is the property of the citizen, and he has a right to protect it.

"But let me remind him that the defendant had cast his wife from him and she had been thrown as debris into the backyard of life, no longer claimed by him and he no longer sought claim to the broken fragments of the heart mercilessly destroyed."

With biting satire the prosecutor continued to arraign the accused, and among other things, he said:

"Let us reverse the situation. If Mildred Hanley had perchance, deserted her husband and his children, had yielded herself to a most notorious life of shame and plunged herself deeper and deeper into the prostitution of her virtue and honor as a wife and the deserted husband had begun to heal his own great sorrow with the friendship or love of another, and in some dark and gloomy hour she should hunt up and kill the one to whom he had gone, do you suppose without money that her attorney could procure any of these noted alienists to testify that she *was insane* at the time of the killing? No, they would coldly proclaim it to have been the revengeful and murderous act of a woman who had no claim upon her husband and the jury would send her to the scaffold or the prisoner's cell."

The conclusion of the State's Attorney was brief. He merely said:

"Take this case, gentlemen, and do justice under the law the court will give you, not some fancied uncertainty of dangerous doctrine hinted at by counsel that consists in crushing a woman in all her helplessness in order that her husband may escape. If you have sympathy to bestow, I pray you to give it to the absent and unhappy woman, who must suffer in order that the defense can be made for her husband that you have heard."

The defense had felt keenly the able speech of the prosecutor, and many times did the accused turn his

face away from the officer as he was being held up to ridicule and scorn because of his contentions. His counsel, too, had been impressed with the danger that might follow his reply.

Soon afterward there came the very lengthy instructions to the jury by the Court, after which the jury retired to their room for deliberation.

Speculation as to how long the jury would remain out before a verdict should be reached, was very generally indulged in. There were many who thought they would return a verdict in less than an hour, so confidently was it expected that an early verdict would be reached. Yet, as time passed, and an hour had gone by, there was nothing heard from the jury room. When two hours had elapsed and nothing had been heard, many of the spectators began slowly to leave the court room; but so great was the interest in the trial, that a very large number, including members of the bar, patiently remained, anxiously awaiting the verdict.

Governor Jones and Judge Young remained seated at their table, engaged in conversation with the defendant. Though apparently interested in what they were conversing about, it was very evident that they were experiencing no little nervousness as to the delay of the jury in making a report. The defendant, now and then paced the floor within the bar, and as time went slowly by, very often looked in the direction of the jury room.

After being out for more than five hours a hung jury began to be predicted.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE VERDICT OF THE UNWRITTEN LAW.

THE accused had been ably defended. Every phase of both sentiment and law had been appealed to that could possibly impress the jury. There was obvious zeal upon the part of the great number of expert witnesses that could not fail in effect, as one by one, each unhesitatingly gave opinions as to their belief in the insanity of the defendant at the time of the killing.

The only issue presented by the instructions of the Court was, in fact, whether the accused was sane or insane, both at the time of the homicide and since. The Court had very plainly told the jury that the killing was not justified under the law, and that a verdict of guilty should be returned unless they should believe in the contended insanity of the accused at the time of taking the life of the deceased. In any event, the jury were told that they must make a finding upon this question, and particularly were they instructed to find by their verdict whether the accused had recovered his sanity since the killing. In order to give him liberation, they were told in unmistakable terms, that they must believe that he had entirely recovered his reason.

Yet, while this was in truth the only issue presented by the Court, it was by no means the reliance of counsel for the defendant.

With skill and eloquence of the master, there had been made a most ingenious plea by Judge Young that went into the hearts of the jury, regardless of the cold letter of the law as defined by the Court. Time after time did it seem that he would speak the very words of the real defense—but he had not done so for the reason that he knew that he would have been chided by the Court because of the impropriety of such an argument. But he had gone far enough always with his adroitness, so that the jury and bystanders even, could understand that he was appealing to that influence, so generally known as "The Unwritten Law," that subtle defense with its plastic pliability, which defies the real law of the land. Though, by no means, a creature of the law, nor being at all, of recent invention, it is that which is known by Courts and lawyers as the invisible shield for crimes denounced by the *written* law. While admittedly, not an offspring of legislative intendment, nor of precedent sanctioned or established by law or Courts, it has become the tacitly accepted and adopted defense in homicide cases, to so great an extent, that Courts are sometimes surprised when it fails to be invoked.

Bold in nomenclature and bolder in the application given it, the most modern jurisprudence of this country has almost been compelled to recognize it. It is to be seriously doubted if there is any defense known

to the law, that some times is so prolific and productive of justice, and at the same time so fraught with danger in the administration of it, by reason of the great susceptibility to abuse, as is the "Unwritten Law." Its abuse, in fact, will ever make impossible it being written into the law books of the country as a permanent institution of defense capable of application in criminal trials, generally. Always regarded as a fiction and species of subterfuge as now most generally employed, it has been permitted by Courts and the public to become an instrumentality, some times employed leigtimately, but more often fraudulently, than any other known defense.

Though without doubt, having for its origin the protection of the home and the fireside, utilized originally, to excuse the just and great provocation presented, as for instance when the husband learns suddenly of the infidelity of the wife and is made acquainted with the identity of the despoiler of the home, by common consent the public has often endorsed and sanctioned its employment as a means of escape from the punishment of the law. Indeed, where there has been the outrage of all rights of the husband, emanating from law or love as to his wife, it has found favor with the public—and doubtless, will always receive its sanction.

Unlike the mob spirit that sometimes wreaks vengeance upon its victim and snuffs out his life with its relentless fury, and where the *public* assumes to become the punishing power, the "*Unwritten Law*" vests this right of the executioner in

the husband, *only*. Its theory is that the wrong committed by the offender is only against *him* and not the public.

If some fearless lawmaker should boldly formulate and ask the passage of a law to the effect that the seducer of the wife should suffer death at the hands of the husband and that his, alone, should be the avenging spirit, or if it should be asserted that the meaning and application of "The Unwritten Law" was tantamount to such a law, society and most eminently respectable Courts of the land would, with great horror, revolt at such a proposed law and shudderingly disclaim any such construction or interpretation of such a defense. The idea and the law, alike, would be denounced as monstrously unjust and hideously undesirable.

And yet, that is the precise meaning and effect of this frequently used defense, in modern criminal trials. It is so interpreted by Courts, lawyers, juries and the public. If the justice of its use ever emanated from the teaching "That the wages of sin is death"—it is most remarkable, indeed, that the vindicatory spirit should be vested in the *individual* and *not* the public.

Whatever of justice there may be in the employment and effect of such a defense, it is largely and mockingly minimized, because, as a matter of fact, theoretically, and of law, juries are not expected to pass upon the efficacy of the defense or the right to kill. This is made most manifest, for the reason that in order to be available as a defense, the defendant

must be proven to have been absolutely insane *at the time of the killing.* In other words, they must believe that the defendant must have been *incapable* of discerning between right and wrong, before he may become the *protector of his home and fireside.*

It, in fact, demands that the sacredness of the virtue of the wife and the instrumentality of punishment of the despoiler of his unhappiness, must be watched over and avenged *with insanity.*

But that is not all. In order that the accused may avail himself of such a defense, he is required to not only prove his insanity at the particular moment, but in order to gain his liberty, he must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the jury that he has since recovered his reason. For that purpose, an army of well-paid and dignified doctors, calling themselves "alienists," get upon the witness stand and one after another have presented to them the "hypothetical" question, based upon the facts as narrated *by the defendant.* After deliberative mental digestion of the facts contained in the question, they very gravely assure the jury that the defendant was unquestionably insane at the unhappy moment of the homicide. They very learnedly deliver dissertations upon the various phases of insanity, dexterously handling huge and technical terms they have been industriously studying since being notified as witnesses, and parading their profound knowledge in that mystifying manner that awes the jury and confuses the rest of mankind. Finally, they reach that peculiar species of aberration that snugly fits the defendant's case and the jury are told

that he was "temporarily and emotionally" insane when the fatal shot was fired. They then proclaim to the world by further testimony that the defendant has fully recovered his mind since then. They assert that the sudden knowledge upon the part of the defendant that his wife was untrue to him and the equal suddenness with which he sees the wrong-doer, is too much for his mind and that for the time being, it gives way to the awfulness of insanity.

He could just as consistently answer similarly in any other murder case, and say that the mind of a man becomes suddenly overpowered when great insult or provocation occurs which may result in human life being taken. But he would not do so, because the law defines that to be such a state of mind that it is known as a human passion that merely reduces the killing to manslaughter, instead of murder. Such testimony would be so antagonistic that it would tend to overthrow all law governing homicide trials, that time has never yet changed. And yet, the average "alienist" would have no difficulty in reasoning that the man who was intensely jealous or greatly and suddenly angered, to the extent that he would kill another, was insane, but such elasticity of conscience bolstering up that type of insanity would scarcely be met with polite reception by bench or bar at this time. The world is not quite ready for that innovation.

After being daily inflicted with the scientific research and weighty consideration by the "alienists" and the arguments of counsel, the jury usually, as was the case in this instance, is given an armful of instruc-

tions, and permitted to retire to the jury room to deliberate upon their verdict, and make disposition of the celebrated case under the influence of "The Unwritten Law."

And, now, my dear reader, let us for once invade the sanctity of the jury room and listen that we may learn how verdicts are reached where human life and death are involved.

Immediately upon having retired there was a selection of their foreman by the jury. Squire Smithers was recognized as the most eminently fitted, as they thought, for this position, and he was therefore unanimously selected. He had been a Justice of the Peace in his township for six years, and it was thought he might "help out" by reason of his experience, if the jury got into a "pinch" as to the law.

The instructions being thrown back of the water *bucket where they were out of the way,* the members of the jury began to make themselves comfortable by divesting themselves of coats and vests on account of the very warm May day. Pipes and tobacco readily appeared in evidence and for the time being there was no pretence of deliberation upon the case, and for a while they rested from their arduous labors.

"Well, now fellers, 'sposin' we take a ballot and see how we stand," said the foreman, finally.

After twelve small slips of paper were prepared and distributed, each juror was requested to write his judgment as to what the verdict should be upon the piece of paper and deposit the same. When they were

all collected, Sam Johnson called off each ballot. The first ballot resulted in there being nine for acquittal and three for conviction.

The ballot was somewhat of a surprise to the jury. Another was taken with the same result.

"Well, 'sposin' we jes talk over the situation a while afore we take another vote," said the foreman.

And gradually, but with some reluctance, they began to discuss the case.

"Mr. Foreman," said farmer Adams, who lived quite a distance in the country, "I would like ter have you fellers hurry this thing through, 'cause I left my boy on the farm and he's the only help I got. It looks to me as though the defendant has lots of friends and I'm for turnin' him loose. He looks like a purty good sort of a feller to me."

A German farmer here arose and addressing the foreman said:

"Mr. Foreman, I dink dot we ought to quit Mr. Hanley. You see dot man vot vas killed, he try to take his vife avay from him. He ought not to do dot. She vas his vooman and he not had a right to daket her avay."

"Well, but the Court said that he did not have a right to kill for that reason," interrupted another juror.

"O vell, I know vot dot Coat said," replied the German. "But how would he like for his vife to be taken avay by some fellow? I tell you dot vooman she belong to Mr. Handley. She vas his. Dere vas no divorce suit tried yet, vos it? Nein. Ven mens

vimmen belong to dem, no udder man has a right to dake dem avay. Dot is de law and ven a man tries dot he ought to get kilt. Didn't you hear dot fine speech of Judge Young? He said it vas de law for Mr. Hanley to kill dot man."

"What law was he talking about? The Court is the one to give us the law," replied the interrupting juror.

"O vell now, dot leetle fellow vot set up tere, he not know more law dan Judge Young. He told us about dat law vat vas not done yet. He said it vas not writ yet. Dot vas de law I talk about. Yes, dot law vot vas not writ. Dot vas de vay it vos in de Faderland. Yah, dot vas de law, dere."

"Well, Mr. Foreman," said another juror. "You see it's just like this. That fellow Gordon is dead and we can't bring him back to life again. He *got caught* and that's all there is to it. Convicting Hanley won't help things. That's the way I look at it. When a man gits caught, he knows he is takin' his life in his own hands. I don't care what Hanley did. If they had a caught him I reckon they might a done the same thing to him. There's no use a ruinin' a man's life for a dead man that did wrong no how. I'm for not guilty."

There was no little handclapping in approval of the remarks of this juror.

"O well, Hanley was crazy at the time of the killing, anyhow," interposed a juror.

At this remark most of the jurors, to a very great

extent, laughed as if a joke were being sprung upon them, the author joining in.

When Juror Connor arose he was accorded immediate attention. He was regarded as the orator of the jury and was very popular with all of them.

"I don't look at this case loike the rest of ye. I don't belave the defindant is crazy, and I don't belave he iver was. You see, the defindant niver had the roight to mistrate his own woman and lave her and the little ones loike he did. He was a bad'n hisself and wint with other wimmen. If he'd bin what he ort to have bin, there niver would ha bin enny trial. But you say, he wint off and desarted the wife, and she knew it. What was she going to do about it? Didn't he throw away his own right to her by his own maneness? If he had bin a rale good man and had caught the poor divil makin' love to his wife, it would have bin different. He had bin doin' the same thing whin away from her. He was jist jealous, that's all. I think the defindant is guilty," said Connor with raised voice and much earnestness.

"But, see here, Connor," answered another juror. "The fact that he might have done wrong didn't justify her. I think that a man is *constituted* differently from a woman. Of course, I don't mean that he has a right to run around, perhaps. But you see, he has always done it, and the women know it when they marry them. It's a sort of a privilege that men have, you see, as long as he don't get caught. Of course, I ain't arguing that a man ought to do these things, but even if he does, his wife doesn't have to do wrong

because he does. I think that when a man is caught he ought to take his medicine. He takes his life in his own hands and knows it when he misbehaves when away from home. This fellow *got caught* and he had to take his medicine and that's all there is to it."

"Well," asked Connor, "suppose he had bin caught, do you think Hanley would hev had the right to kill him after he found it out through some other manes? What's the matter wid ye? Air ye a tryin' to say that if he wasn't caught, that he didn't do wrong, or do you say that he ought simply to be kilt fer gittin' caught? That won't do, aither. This man did just as wrong whether he was caught or not. That's all Tommy rot, my friend. Now say here. The defindant told us whin on the stand that he did wrong hisself. Now, we have caught up with him. Do you think that some husband ought to come and murther him for tellin' on hisself? Not on your loife, ye don't."

"But, Connor," expostulated Squire Smtihers, "don't you know that the Good Book teaches that "The wages of sin is death?" and this is a punishment for that man Gordon."

The Squire felt that he had delivered a knockout blow and felt highly pleased with himself.

"Well," replied Connor, "we are not thryin' of this case accordin' to how the Bible rades. But if we air, thin accordin' to ye own argumint, Hanley ought to be taken out and kilt because he pladed guilty to doin' the same thing.

"And thin another thing. What's all this blubber

about the written law and unwritten law? Didn't we swere to thry the defindant accordin' to the law? What law? Why the law ov the State that's on the statute books, that's what. Who said anything about any unwritten law except thim lawyers, anyway? What in the devil is the unwritten law? Who got the thing up?

"The Judge niver said anything about sich a thing and Oi don't belave in sich junk. An' won't ye tell me, what in the divil did they bring this defindant to the courthouse for, if they didn't want to thry him accordin' to the law that is *writ,* bedad?"

Connor had worked himself into a somewhat excited frame of mind, but he was being listened to very attentively by all of the jury.

The discussion went on and on, each juror expressing himself freely and with much originality. During the time many games of cards were played, many yarns exchanged and a rather enjoyable time was had. Instead of a jury deliberating in a murder trial, one might easily have taken it for some farmers' meeting disturbed by a noisy Irishman.

Finally another ballot was taken, the result of the count showing that there were eleven for acquittal and one for conviction.

It was well known that the contentious juror was Connor.

The members of the jury began to twit him with the loneliness of his position and some sneering remarks were made, to all of which he gave fitting reply.

"Whin ye think that ye can change me that way, ye air very much mistaken and Oi'm afther tellin' ye that ye'll find me here a long time afore Connor changes his moind," he said, among other things.

It so happened that there was a very quiet man upon the jury who had never expressed himself. He was a merchant that lived and conducted a small store near one of the mines of a large company for which Judge Carr, one of the counsel for the defendant, was the regular attorney. Now, Connor worked in one of the company's mines as a sort of timber boss and was drawing fair compensation for the work which he did. The merchant knew Connor fairly well. And after listening to one of the bitter outbursts of Connor, had gone to him and had taken him to one side, away from the other jurors and talked in a low tone of voice to Connor for some time. Though the other jurors never knew what was said to Connor, the following is what was said:

"Now, see here, Connor, Judge Carr, one of the defendant's lawyers, is the regular attorney for the mining company you work for. I just want to tell you that if he finds out that you are for conviction, your job is gone. The thing for you to do is to keep your mouth shut and vote for acquittal. It is nothing to me, but I would hate to see you lose your job for your family's sake. When the next ballot is taken you vote right and I will have everybody to agree that no one must ever know how the jury stood at any time."

In a short time afterward another ballot was taken. The result was *not guilty*.

The merchant kept his word to Connor and the jury made the agreement as to silence so far as the public was concerned as to the status of the jury at any time.

The foreman now knocked loudly upon the door, indicating that the presence of the sheriff was desired. When that worthy officer came to the door he was informed that a verdict had been arrived at.

In a short time afterward, having informed the Court, the jury was ushered into the court room to their places in the jury box.

Upon being asked if they had agreed upon a verdict, the foreman answered:

"We have, your Honor."

When the verdict was passed to the clerk and before it was read, the Court took occasion to admonish the audience that he would not tolerate any demonstration of approval or disapproval of the verdict.

The verdict was read finding the defendant not guilty because of the finding by the jury that the defendant was insane at the time of the slaying, there being the further verdict that he had recovered his reason.

Notwithstanding the admonition of the Court that there should be no demonstration of the spectators upon the reading of the verdict, the entire audience seemed to immediately show its approval of the verdict by a long loud cheer that could be heard far out into the street, bringing many citizens to the court room who had heard the applause given. Any effort

to check such a demonstration would have been futile. The defendant was a happy man. His lawyers crowded around him with their congratulations, after which he shook hands with each of the jurors. The audience appeared to all want to shake his hand and crowded around him for several minutes with their congratulations.

With a great transition that had taken place and followed by friends and accompanied by his attorneys, Paul Hanley now left the court room, a free man.

The great trial was over.

The "Unwritten Law," as interpreted by the jury, had won another victory.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### DIVORCED.

THE acquittal of Paul was by no means a surprise to any one. From the very first, there was confident prediction by friends and foes that conviction could never be had. The days that followed the trial, he had spent largely in receiving the unreserved congratulations that came to him constantly. His appearance upon the streets was always the signal for the gathering of crowds around him of loyal friends. There came to him, too, messages by letter, wire and newspapers commending him and endorsing the verdict.

In truth, he found himself so profusely praised and fawned upon by the public, generally, that to a great extent, he began to appear as an unwilling subject of hero worship so often resulting from the fickleness of the public with its varying fancies. For a short while, with his first blush of victory and his natural and incidental buoyancy of spirits, he had to some degree, enjoyed the fullness of his liberty as well as the continued and unvaried words of praise that kept pace with his every hour.

Yet as the days went by, there came to him the more settled frame of mind. He began to appear

without the smile he had once worn. He found himself not wishing for the plaudits of the public. He began to have that which invariably comes to the mind that has passed through the mental ordeal of re-enacting the events of a tragedy. It may or may not be the truthful observation of the world, but it is rare, indeed, if the human mind can completely throw aside the ever-present recollection of the death struggles of the victim of a homicide, whether justifiable under the law or not. To Paul, there came much of the silent sorrow and many a troubled hour. He had at times relived the dark hours through which he had gone. Always did he find refuge behind the law and the jury verdict, and when tenaciously there clung to him memories he sought to drive away, he would most frequently find the law's support as the last resort.

Added to it all, there appeared to him the contemplation of what he had intended to bring about. He would not let his mind reason upon the subject as to whether he should divorce Mildred. From every side came argument and influence that impelled him to do so. He had convinced himself that he could no longer have any vestige of love for her—that the public would greatly scorn and sneer at him, if, indeed, he did not do so. He had not only not seen or in any manner heard from her, but had always contrived to avoid any mention of her in any way, whatsoever. He was not at all unmindful of all that he had confessed as against himself while upon the witness stand and he had full appreciation as he

thought of the extent of his own errors, but when he thought of Mildred as the unworthy mother of his children, and as an adulteress, there grew always the enormity of her sin. He could never forgive, and indeed, he could neither debase himself nor his friends by pursuing any other course than freeing himself.

There was no surprise, therefore, when the suit for divorce was afterward filed by his attorney, Judge Young. Upon the contrary, it was generally expected that such a course would be adopted by him.

When the necessary process of summons was served upon Mildred, she was not unprepared for the same. She at once consulted with State's Attorney McElroy, whom she employed. He had advised her that there could be nothing accomplished except to safeguard the children. There was, therefore, no answer filed, and a default permitted to be taken.

The case had so far progressed that it was ready for submission, when Judge Young suggested that his client was desirous of making voluntary settlement upon his wife and a meeting at the office of Mr. McElroy was arranged for, and that it was necessary for the personal presence of each of them so that there could be the adjustment desired. At first both Paul and Mildred objected as to the necessity of their meeting, and her attorney had advised strongly against it, but the judgment of the old lawyer to the effect that the legality of the proceedings required it, prevailed.

So, during the morning of a September day, Paul

accompanied his attorney to the office of Mr. McElroy, knowing that for the first time since that fateful night he would see Mildred. He felt his heart grow restless as they approached the entrance of the office and experienced no little embarrassment as he walked into the presence of his wife. Mildred was sitting upon the west side of the room as he entered with little Aldine standing near her. There was no sign of recognition upon the part of either of them. Paul, as if he did not know of Mildred's presence walked deliberately to the window on the north side of the room and took a seat. As he did so, Aldine walked over to him and he took her into his arms. He played with and talked to her and manifested eagerness of affection for her. But at no time did Mildred turn her face in the direction of where he was sitting. After remaining with her father for some time Aldine seemed to grasp the situation of silence between them.

The attorneys were busily engaged in drawing up some necessary receipts to be signed and other incidental agreements as to the separation. The table at which they were sitting was in the center of the room, there being one upon each side of same. To each of them and, in fact, to all of the occupants of the office the intense quietude and silence that prevailed was embarrassing. As they carefully scanned the papers being held by them, there were but few words spoken. Paul was giving to his wife one-half of his estate, a rather liberal allowance under the circumstances. The agreement to be signed was to the effect that Paul

was to be given the custody of Aldine under the law, but he had consented that Mildred should take her upon any departure from the State, provided Mrs. Andrews should accompany the child.

When he had been asked to give such permission, he had answered Judge Young, by saying:

"Yes, Judge, if Mrs. Andrews is going with the child, I will be perfectly contented. I love that good woman as if she were my mother."

And Paul had really always felt a strong affection for her and evinced it toward her very often. She had returned his feeling and had in many ways, never hesitated with her love for him.

When, however, it came to the disposition of the little babe now nearly two years of age, Paul had stubbornly refused to recognize him as his own, though repeatedly urged by his kindly old attorney to do so. It had been settled, however, by all of the parties that legal custody of little George was to be given to Mildred without publicity to be given as to Paul' contentions.

When Mildred had been informed at her home by her attorney as to Paul's attitude, she burst into tears and refused to believe the attorney, but when he impressed her with the truthfulness of his representations, she wept out her feelings by saying:

"I know that I have wronged Paul and I can never forgive myself, but God knows, dear little George is Paul's son. Tell him that Mildred, who is the mother, begs him to believe her."

When her words were repeated to him, Paul was obdurate. He refused to believe.

The entire matter having been gone over by the attorneys, they were preparing for the signatures of each of the parties and only a little writing was necessary to be concluded by Judge Young.

Aldine had been running around the room engaged in play, going to first one and then the other of her parents and had placed her doll in her mother's lap. Without any warning whatever as to what she did, she suddenly ran over to her father and tugging at his hand, as he quietly sat there, said to him with the dear little voice of innocence as to all that would take place:

*"Now papa, why don't you talk to my mama?"*

With averted faces they had been in the presence of each other several minutes. They had in an enforced way met, with a realization of what the world had made for them as the conventional proprieties that should govern them. Not only had they not spoken to each other, but they had refrained from even looking in the direction of where each sat. More than that, they each well knew that there was a determination upon the part of both of them to chill and kill their loves for each other forever. Every influence and condition had conspired to bury rather than to revive affection and regard. They had forgotten, even, that there was a tie that could ever bind them together again.

It was the old,old story of the little child leading the way. It was the silvery-toned voice of innocent

Now papa, why don't you talk to my mama?

childhood that could attune the heart-strings into a unison of harmony—and it was the softened touches of little fingeres that could again play upon those human harp strings and revive the dear sweet strains of the world's story and song of memory's love—and, too, it was the little hand that could turn the knob of the doorway of memory, flooding these saddened units of the world with sad and tender recall, that there stood their own blood sounding the last call to loves that lingered still.

For a moment there was the silence that reigns after the lightning's bolt has found its way before the thunder rolls.

The lawyers maintained that silence which knows of the delivered blow when the wound is searched for.

Soon there was heard a suppressed sob from the breast of poor Paul. There was no disguise that he employed to hide his emotion. His whole body shook and trembled as he burst into manly tears that pride could not overcome. Nor was he alone in his feelings. The beautiful wife and mother, she who had been imperious in her early womanhood, she who had given the very great fullness of her heart with a great love, to Paul, she, who had been chastised with the sorrows that had come from sin and death, turned her face for once in the direction of Paul and yielded to the tears and sobs that now overwhelmed her. Unable to appreciate and know that she had been the cause of the emotion of her parents, little Aldine, who had been the instrumentality of so much real happiness to the father and the mother, but who was

arresting their dying loves for the moment, was adding her childish tears, as she put her head in her mother's lap.

It is almost humorous, sometimes, to observe the awkwardness with which grown-up men seek to avoid the embarrassment of such a situation as the one presented. Here were two educated lawyers who had gone through life, largely dealing with life's woes and passions in their varied forms—who had often seen sorrows and suffering as their profession occasioned—who were by no means strangers to similar scenes.

Good old Judge Young, who had really secretly planned the necessity of the meeting, with the hope of there being a possible reconciliation, was standing near the table with two suspiciously large tears rolling down his cheeks. There was nothing left him to do, as he viewed the matter, but to blow his nose very significantly, by which means he could easily hide his emotion. This he did, in fair imitation of the trumpeting of an elephant. At the same time, the hardened prosecutor had turned his face from the Judge and was giving away to a violent spell of coughing, that was bidding fair to become almost a paroxysm of alarming proportions. To them it seemed pre-eminently proper for them to have suddenly so engaged in such exercises in order, as they thought, to hide the spectacle of such real dignity as they possessed, being surrendered to sentiment of any kind. It was the Judge who suggested that he would

go down into the drug store and procure something for a cold, and he had said to the prosecutor:

"Won't you come and join me, Robert?" as he started out of the door leading downstairs.

"No, Judge, I will remain here and finish drawing up this agreement."

What he meant was that he proposed to show the aged lawyer that he could avoid betraying the weakness that he had shown, and that he could go on through the scene with such dignity and indifference to sentiment as became his profession and office.

He knew that Judge Young had *not gone* to any drug store.

Judge Young also knew that the prosecutor would soon follow.

Perhaps the short space of a minute had elapsed when, sitting at a table pretending to write, with the sobs of his friends sounding in his ears, and viewing the sad havoc created by the little girl, the very talented and dignified State's Attorney McElroy suddenly came to the conclusion that his cough was rapidly growing worse, and with that impression firmly fixed in his mind, started to the same drug store to which his old friend had gone.

But for some reason, possibly absent-mindedness, he dropped into a certain bar, where he was not surprised to see Judge Young with one arm upon the bar and who said to him:

"I ordered for you, as you see," at the same time pointing to the two drinks already on the bar.

They had remained away for some time and upon their return, they each confidently hoped that there might be a reunion of their clients. But upon entering, it was evident that there was no change that had taken place in that direction, the only apparent difference being that they subdued and controlled to a great extent, their feelings.

And so, all of the requirements of the transaction being followed as to the signing by both parties of several instruments, Paul, accompanied by his attorney, left the office with Mildred remaining, who, after further advice being given her, departed for her home.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE PASSING OF TIME

A DIVORCE had been granted to Paul and the property settlement had been made, and it was only a few weeks afterward that Mildred, accompanied by her mother and her little children, left C. with the intention of making her home in the city of N——, in the State of T——.

One night at about twelve o'clock, at that time, she had taken a train at C., with a few friends telling her farewell. She had not kept her intended leave-taking from her acquaintances, but without pretence as to preparation, had quietly informed her nearest friends of her intention to leave the little town where she had enjoyed so much happiness. As the time drew near for her to leave, her heart was made to grow full in contemplation of the struggle that she knew would be required.

She lived over the years of her early life many times, passing through the countless joys and intense sorrows of her later years. Regretting as she did the moment when she would be compelled to sadly leave the home of her early girlhood and womanhood, with all of the dear memories that now came to

her, remembering the friends that had seemed to be countless to her at one time and knowing how few, indeed, they had now become in number, she felt the wisdom of her mother's judgment that the only course left to be pursued was to begin life anew elsewhere.

The exile into which she was forcing herself, as the time drew near, had brought punishment and sorrow without abatement. Her pride had been humbled with the coming of time after the clouds had come into her life. The great bitterness of the cup out of which she drank had never lessened.

During the months that she had remained in C., before she left, she had never essayed to appear in public. She had had no desire in that direction. In fact, the only time when she had ever gone upon the streets of the little town, was when she had driven to her lawyer's office on the occasion of her seeing Paul for the last time. While she was not averse to seeing those of her acquaintances whom she knew to be loyal to her, she had seen them only at her home.

She and her mother had remained closely at home. She spent much of her time in the natural devotion she felt for her children. She found herself to have a growing affection for them. As her sorrows became more mellowed with the passing of time, she gave herself up to exclusive attention to them. She had not allowed her own sad state to rob or deprive her of maternal love. The reverse was true, for she now felt it to be a more than consoling diversion to turn the darkness of brooding care to the lighter and sweeter cares of love.

The solitude that had fallen her lot as a result of the unhappy train of events, had left its unmistakable evidence of punishment. Though possessed still, of that charm of beauty, which she ever had, yet there were evidenced marked influences that were antagonizing her youth.

Let no one who may read these lines, think with the slightest pause, that her heart had not gone through the inflictions of most awful torture. She had gone to her God with bended knee and most contrite heart seeking the forgiveness her real womanhood demanded. Often in the company of her beloved pastor and always made stronger with his consolation and advice, she had become a most thoroughly penitent woman. She had made that progress, the real Christianity of the Saviour teaches can come to the world, and as she did so, there began to reappear some of her magnificence of spirit and character. And though yet a sad-faced woman, the mutations of time had begun to assert themselves. She learned of the unforgiving spirit of her sex as she correspondingly learned of the graciousness of the Spirit whom she had most offended.

And when the train had pulled out at C., on the night of her departure, there was no little of scorn for the uncharitable persecution she had endured at the hands of an unforgiving public, and particularly, the pretentious ostracism that emanated from the women of her home, although she yet felt the undiminished humility of her position. She had learned that the humanity that she had known so well, was

not the Christianity she was seeking so hard to learn. Her experience had somewhat justly embittered her against the usurping element so much in evidence that hides wtihin the folds of pretence and hypocrisy and doubtless, the same unrelentless scorn and lack of charity which scare so many away from the doors of the church.

Indeed, are there not more souls lost, after all, through the withholding of the hand of charity and just a little of the heart's kindness—and the suppression of human sympathy from our fellows, than any other reason?—And particularly is this true when there is the austere and forbidding demeanor by those who assume so much of the Holier-Than-Thou spirit of the world? But it was ever true of the world. Where cant rather than Christ rules;—where the dogma rather than the deed of right makes conquest;—where pretence rather than principle prevails, then always will the human family perish at the steps of the church they feel driven *from* rather than led *into* the folds of Christianity.

Upon arriving in the city of N.—a suitable and unpretentious home was secured where they began anew to fight the battles of life. Here, they lived amid new surroundings, and in the course of time finding newly-made friends that brought about the elimination of some of the acuteness of memory.

The beauty of Mildred early began to attract admiration to her, that she not only did not seek or court, but that she rather avoided. She remained with her mother and the children at her newly-found

home and avoided any premature extension of acquaintanceship. She and her mother felt that it was only a question of time until her sorrows would follow her and she preferred to await the overtures of time and its complacency rather than to subject herself to the crucifixion by the public again.

Time continued to deal kindly with all of the little family with good health being bestowed upon them.

As the years went by, however, Mildred was robbed of her best of all friends. Age and its ravages had for some time begun to show upon the dear old mother who had always been her staunchest support and consolation. Stricken with a most malignant type of typhoid fever, the disease began to slowly consume and weaken the vitality already menaced by age. Thought to have passed the critical period of her illness, Mildred's heart was gladdened by the intelligence that the crisis had passed and that she would recover, in the opinion of the attending physician. But the wasted form could not muster the strength required and a sudden relapse had set in. With the best nursing and with Mildred constantly at her bedside, everything possible was done for the noble-hearted woman. Always with the very greatest courage she had cheerfully assured Mildred that she would soon be herself again. Brave to the very last, she continued, though bedridden, to give courage and comfort to Mildred. And though she continued to maintain that she would soon recover, it could be seen by Mildred that she was beginning to show the inevitable signs of dissolution. Day

by day the kindly eyes grew dimmer than the day before, when finally, one day after the doctor had gone, Mildred was called to the bedside of her mother. The daughter could see that a significant change had taken place in the condition of her mother. She hastily again sent for the doctor, but before he came the mother insisted upon Mildred taking her hands.

As she did so, the mother's voice began to tremblingly say: "My poor, dear girl! How you have suffered!"

As she spoke Mildred felt herself seized with the greatest fear. But she said in reply as if to encourage her:

"No, dear mother, your own great love has kept me from suffering. You have made me want to live. Do not worry for me, dear one. You will soon grow better and be my darling mother again, won't you?"

The tears came in the eyes of the dying woman and as she grasped her daughter's hands in hers, she began suddenly to gasp as if for breath. She seemed to partially recover herself, however, and said:

"No, my dear Mildred—I will not grow better—I will soon be with your dear father—I am passing back to Him who gave me to the world. Dear child, I would want to live, just for you.—But—your old mother must leave you—now. God is calling and I must go to—do kiss me—once more. How I have loved you precious child How I have tried to stand between you and the cruel—world—only He knows."

The good woman began to sink rapidly and as the

doctor now came in and to her side, he could see that the end was near.

"Mildred—my Mildred—kiss"—but she never finished the sentence. She died with love on her lips —died as a pure-hearted and Christian woman, that she was. No brave soldier ever wielded the lance against contending foes with greater valor than had this dying soul striven with her love for the child of adoption.

How intense was the grief of Mildred, no one could ever know. She fell across the breast of her mother and hundreds of times kissed the pallid cheeks and lips that had so lately spoken for the favor of the daughter's kiss.

She had given way, now, to her uncontrollable grief for the death of the only one that she knew really loved her. She never knew but that she was her own mother—and both of the parents had, to their graves, been faithful to their promises that she should never know but that they were her real parents.

But could ever mother by blood have been nearer and dearer to her, than this strong-hearted old woman? Was ever heart purer or truer than had been hers?

When Mildred stood at the graveside of her mother and shed the tears of unchecked grief, that seemed so incapable of being changed, she felt her loneliness with a keenness that was now appalling. Through her mother's bravery and goodness she had been enabled to face the world and fight her way

from humiliation and shame to her God. But what could she accomplish now? Upon whom could she now rely? To whom could she now turn for that sweet consolation that was always hers from her mother? Dear old Dr. Eldred was gone sometime since, and now, it was *mother,* who must be taken away.

At the time of her mother's death, Aldine had grown to be about the age of ten years and George had reached something near six years. With her mother's death she had turned more and more to her children, who had become the last source of greatest comfort to her.

Aldine was one of those bright and endearing young girls that so easily win their way into hearts. She was dutiful to her mother and their affection had become a charm with each of them. While both of the children were attending school, yet Aldine was receiving assistance from her mother in many ways clearly shown. For instance, inheriting her mother's musical talent, she was being given special attention by Mildred with most flattering results. Her inherited ability gave her mother much satisfaction and it enabled her to devote her efforts toward educating Aldine, and produced within her a great ambition for her future.

Aldine regularly received letters from her father who still lived in C. On three or four occasions she had visited him and had remained with him during parts of vacations. These letters were always of the most affectionate nature and gave her very much

pleasure. In none of them, however, was there ever any mention of her mother. Being too young to have remembered any of the incidents that caused the separation of her parents, upon several occasions she had pressed her mother for the reason for their not living together. Mildred had told her that they could not agree and for that reason a divorce had been granted. This did not satisfy Aldine and she asked:

"But mother, *why* didn't you agree? Was it your fault or his?"

It was plain to the child that the mother did not relish her question, but as she turned away from Aldine, she answered:

"My child, I hope that you will never ask me about this again. But I will tell you that it was MY fault."

"How could my dear mother have been to blame? I know that you could not and I will not believe you."

As the child addressed her mother she saw that there were tears in her eyes, and she ran to her and throwing her arms around her kissed her again and again, saying, to her:

"Please, mother, do not cry. I will not mention it again. But you see I just can't believe you though you say it."

It was indeed a most trying ordeal for Mildred. She felt as if she should tell Aldine but her jealous regard made her fear that she might lose her love. So she had not only refrained from telling her but had again admonished her that she must not mention the subject again.

One day when Aldine was about twelve years of age, a letter had come for her while she was at school, from her father. Upon her return home she had opened the letter and was engaged in reading it when she suddenly cried out to her mother:

"Oh mother, what do you think? Father has married."

The blood suddenly left the face of Mildred for the moment and it was very clear to the child that her mother was affected by her news. There was no difficulty in reading the pain that came across the face of her mother. Aldine was quick to see the sudden change and to go to her at once.

"How could he have done such a thing and with you living?" she both asked and asserted. "I don't think that he had a right to do such a thing," she added.

"But, my child, your father had a right to remarry and if he loves his wife, it is quite proper for him to do so. You must know as I have told you, that we are nothing to each other since the divorce was granted."

Mildred had partially recovered her composure and was attempting to answer with assumed indifference. She could easily discern that her reply did not satisfy even the youthful mind and she also knew that her nervous emotion had not escaped Aldine, when the news of Paul's marriage was made known. But how else could she escape from the loving inquiry, unless she boldly spoke the truth, which she dared not do?

The death-knell of her love, it would seem, had come. It was true that Paul had at last disowned all recognition of her and had married the daughter of a very wealthy citizen of the section in which C. was situated. In fact, she had known his second bride—a most lovable and delightful woman, with many friends who delighted in her friendship. She knew her to be not only a good woman, but one whose womanhood had always been admired and respected. She would rather, down deep in her heart that it had not been so.

There came over the lonely woman a change in disposition that was inevitable. As she had continued to absent herself from every species of pleasure and had devoted herself so exclusively to her children and their welfare, Mildred began to feel once more a desire to throw aside the seriousness of the life she was living and to engage in some of the pleasures of her past. She did not desire any of the gayety of society, nor the entry of any realm so fringed with the conventionalities of the time, but she was yet a young woman, and she had begun to feel the effects of the life of the recluse. She longed once more for the enjoyable horseback ride. She wishd that she might call to her, the irrepressible "Raritan" for just one dash over the neighboring roads.

Ah, what ineffably dear memories came to her as she recalled that dear horse of her father! How she recalled the day that she had against her father's wishes, stolen him out of the stable and had ridden

him! How he fought her every effort at control of him! Indeed, did she not remember the occasion when coming through the streets of C. he had frightened at a threshing separator upon the public square and had tried to throw her? How he had lunged and reared and had avoided being ridden in the direction of the machine! She had not forgotten how she had refused the proffered assistance of many men who came running to catch hold of the bridle, fearing that he would throw her. As she looked back, she could almost see the handsome man who had dashed to the horse's head and had caught hold of the rein as "Raritan" was misbehaving and trying to throw her. That was Paul. She had cut him with her whip, to make him turn loose his hold. And then when she had compelled the unruly horse to finally yield and approach the cause of his fright, and then with docility go up the street to her home! Dear days! But now so utterly beyond recall!

One day, not long after she had permitted her mind to run in this direction, she had mentioned her desire for a horse to Mr. Caldwell, her banker.

Mr. Caldwell had always been exceedingly kind and courteous to her in the few business transactions she had had at the bank and she felt that he would assist her.

"Why, my dear Mrs. Hanley," he replied. "I did not know that you were a horse fancier. Had I so known, I would have proffered you one of my own horses, long ago. I am sure that he would please you, and if you will permit I will bring him to you

any time you wish. And if you will only allow me the pleasure of accompanying you, I will guarantee his good behavior."

The banker was eager in his tender as she could see. Several times he had sought to engage Mildred in conversation aside from business, but adhering always to her policy of avoiding rather than cultivating acquaintances, she had refrained from even noticing his overtures.

But now, she had felt that since she so desired a horse again, there was no justice in denying the offered friendship. She therefore said to him in reply:

"Your kindness will certainly be more than appreciated. I do so love horses, that the pleasure of mounting one again will be a great delight to me."

While she had no other than a casual acquaintance with him, the banker had always been very courteously engaging in his manner toward her, and she felt no hesitancy as to accepting his offer.

As a result, on the next afternoon, he had ridden up to her home riding a dark bay and leading a black horse that at once reminded her of her own "Raritan." She found the horse to be a most charming mount, and had enjoyed the ride which they had taken, with unfeigned pleasure. She had convinced him that she was a skilled horsewoman, and he had secretly admired the manner in which she so gracefully sat her horse. As they rode, the exhilarating influences and effect of the exercise, had brought the surging and beautiful glow of health to her cheeks.

She had suddenly become the Mildred of old with her countless charms.

As she rode by his side, his admiration of her was easily felt. With compliments as to her skill, he, himself being a most accomplished horseman, he was taking much pride in her companionship. She appreciated his courtesies and compliments and thoroughly enjoyed her outing.

When she alighted at her home after having given her promise of another engagement, she had turned with a smile of thanks to the Southerner and walked into the front yard where she met Aldine.

This was the forerunner of many more rides.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### REMARRIED.

GEORGE CALDWELL was cashier of the First National Bank of N., and though not wealthy, was considered a successful business man. He had never married and had always lived with his mother, who was a somewhat pretentiously aristocratic leader in social circles. He loved his mother and to a large degree was obediently mindful of her wishes. He was not unlike the average young man of his time and country. He had not been free from some of the errors and mistakes of young men. At times he had been given to dissipation and had occasioned his mother no little worry, but in more recent years, his habits were more exemplary and his escapades of less frequent occurrence.

After the companionship of the first ride, he had called at he home of Mildred many times.

He frequently accompanied her to the theaters and other places of amusement. In fact, he was soon a very attentive admirer without concealment. He was not only a companionable man, but was a man of no little refinement and accomplishment. He possessed the attainments that go with a collegiate education and was a most pleasing entertainer in conversation as in other respects.

While Mildred was not infatuated with him, yet she knew that she was beginning to very much admire him. His kindness to her had impressed her and she felt herself yielding to the friendship he was offering. Always, he had been most gentlemanly and considerate of her most trivial wishes. That she did not love him, she felt sure. And yet she was equally sure that he would soon declare his love to her.

She dreaded the coming of such an event.

She had not permitted herself to even assume that George Caldwell was ignorant of her unhappy past. She could not conceive of such being the case. Nor could she think of such a man wishing marriage with her when the truth should be told him. She knew, too, that her sense of justice would impel her, though with the greatest shame, to faithfully lay before him her sin, if, indeed, he should ever go so far as to offer her his hand in marriage. The very thought of the possibility of events confused her to the extent that she began to wish that their friendship had never arisen.

Months went by and with the coming of time, Mildred more and more had entered again into the spirit of life.

True, indeed, the spectre of her sorrow would often intrude itself upon her and on such occasions her heart would bleed as in memory she would be taken back to the dark hours of her life. At times she would grow dispirited, and with only the greatest effort, throw off her burdensome despondency. But with the responsibilities of a mother and the real love

she bore for her children, she would courageously resume her newer self. One winter night the snow had fallen to the depth of several inches and as she looked out upon arising the next morning, her heart seemd to sink within her at its sight. There came to her the awful reminder—the stage setting of sin. She beheld the snow as if it were the morning after the tragedy. How intense were the sufferings of the heartsore woman! Yet her heart was as pure as the driven snow itself.

How true it is that the extent of suffering is the measure of the sins we commit against our God!

It had been nearly a year since George Caldwell had begun paying his attentions to Mildred. Never directly had he made open avowal of his love; but his demeanor had been that of greatest admiration. In many ways he had shown himself in the guise of a most devoted admirer. Eager always to be in her presence, remembering her constantly with flowers and costly presents, there could be no mistaking his attentions.

One night they had returned from the theater and he had insisted upon remaining for a time. Mildred had been most charmingly gowned and as she sat by his side, in all her beauty, he had been more than ever drawn to her. To him she was one beautiful and fascinating dream, and he could no longer restrain his love for her.

Seated by her side at her home, for some reason there was a more than usual pause in their conversa-

tion. Instinctively they each seemed to sense the happening of the coming event.

He now dared to give expression of his heart. As he touched her, she realized that a possible unhappy incident was about to take place. She did not withdraw from him, but permitted his overtures.

"Mildred," he began, "I love you and I want you to be my wife," and thus addressing her, he sought to place his arm around her.

Mildred, however, was quick to release herself from his embrace, and it was plain to him that she was undergoing great emotion.

"My dear kind friend," she said, "please do not pain me by asking me that which is impossible. I can never be your wife."

"But Mildred, am I distasteful to you? Can you not return the love which I offer you?" he asked as he again sought her hand.

"Mr. Caldwell," she replied, "you are far too much of a gentleman for me to speak other than with the greatest candor. You have been so kind and dear to me," and Mildred put her hand upon his, "that I shrink from telling you that I do not love you. I cannot tell you how dear you are to me, but I cannot give you my heart. You would not want me to marry you without I loved you, surely?"

"But my dear woman," he replied, "you may not be able to say that you return my love with the ardor with which I offer it. Still, I feel and I know that in time I would win your heart in its entirety. I do not fear upon that score. I know that I could make you

a happy woman with the love I bear for you. It would be no experiment, but would be the foregone conclusion of a love that is all yours. Dear Mildred, I cannot take 'No' for an answer." He spoke with great earnestness.

"How hard you make it for me to refuse you, dear friend," she said. "I feel that you really love me and I know that you would be kind to me and mine."

As she spoke, she drew away from him; and as she did so her face gave evidence of pain and suffering. Hesitating for the moment, she arose, and standing in front of him, continued:

"Besides, I feel compelled to tell you that when I have told you another more vitally important reason as to why you should not marry me, and when I shall have told you of the great blot upon my own life, you will shrink from me as one to be hated rather than loved. My heart bleeds as I know that I must speak truthfully to you. I believe in, and dear friend, I trust you.

"I have not been unprepared for this moment to arrive. In fact, I have felt for a long time that soon you would tell me of your love—and it has hurt me keenly to know of what pain you might suffer when you learn the truth about me dishonoring another"—

Mildred had really begun to tell him of the great sorrow of her life, but she was interrupted by him as he suddenly and boldly threw his arms around her and drew her to him. She struggled to free herself, but as she did so he held her the more closely.

"Unhappy woman," he said to her, "you need go

no further. I know every word you would say. My own sense of honor would not permit me to let you tell me the sad story of your life. Do not open a wound that time should heal. I am honoring the fine womanhood that could permit you to lay bare your unhappiness. I know that the heart that can be so truthful is more than worthy of any love I could give. I love you, now, more than ever. Come, Mildred, my heart calls for you."

As he now spoke to her, there were tears in her eyes, and as she looked into his face, she felt how great indeed must be his love for her.

"Do you mean to say that after knowing of my deep sin that you want me for your wife?" she asked.

"Yes, yes, a thousand times yes," was his answer.

"But do you think in after years your love might not chill and there might not come the revulsion of feeling that could make your love die?" she asked.

"No, Mildred, I tell you no. Speak and give me the answer my love craves," he impetuously implored.

As she looked up into his eyes he saw her answer and he fondly kissed her while in his arms.

She had told him that she did not love him and had been so perfectly candid with him that there could be no mistake. Yet he insisted.

The poor heart had been disturbed with sad loneliness so long and there was so much apparent nobility about Mr. Caldwell's love that she had felt no self-censure. Why should she not yield herself to one who could thus love? And, indeed, might he not make her happy with such generous affection?

Added to the despairing loneliness of herself, and with so much of coldness that she had felt from the world, was the great desire for the sympathy that a woman's heart craves and the protecting companionship nature demands.

She remained up for a long time after her accepted suitor had gone; and even after she had retired, it was far into the morning before she fell into slumbrous dreams of happiness once more.

Within a month they were quietly married.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### WOE'S CRUCIBLE.

MILDRED'S husband was lavish in the manner of his treatment of her. He spared nothing in order that he might make suitable provision for her and her children. Immediately after their marriage he had taken her to a most elegantly furnished home where she was provided with every luxury she could wish for. He lost no opportunity to show considerate regard for her every wish.

Following their marriage, they had entertained somewhat generously, and their new home became noted for its hospitality. Her husband was exceedingly proud of her, and courted the unlimited admiration of her beauty and accomplishments. She always made a most popular hostess and her friends began to increase very rapidly in numbers.

Mildred, for many months was as nearly happy as she had expected to be. Her husband had not only been kind to her and always indulgently considerate, but he had won his way toward her heart by his splendid qualities of a husband. Six months had gone by and not a cloud had hovered over her except that which came from the past.

But when several years had elapsed conditions were greatly changed.

George Caldwell, for more than three years had become a changed man. He had slowly but surely acquired the habits of intemperance. At first, he had begun to indulge mildly and was never noticeably intoxicated. But as time went by he began to come home under the influence of drink. As the habit grew upon him, he also acquired the habit of coming home tardily and at late hours. Once he had remained away all night. Mildred had not scolded, but with dearest kindness she had pleaded with him to desist. For a time, he would refrain from indulgence, but for no longer period than a week at a time.

Mildred had become troubled to such an extent that her face showed it. Her friends, while not mentioning it, yet gave most unmistakable evidence of knowing the cause of her worry.

Added to his dissipation was the gambling vice. Frequently, now, he would remain away all night, always giving plausible "business" reasons as excuses.

It was not long before he was asked to resign his position at the bank, because of some alleged irregularity which his aged mother adjusted.

From the time of his discharge from the bank, he grew rapidly worse in his habits and seemed to lose all sense of pride. Absenting himself from his home for days at a time was by no means unusual. It was now becoming a rare thing for him to enter his home, except when under the influence of intoxicants. At first when intoxicated, he conducted himself in a most

kindly though drunken manner; but there came the time when he became abusive of Mildred and the children.

He now began to borrow heavily from Mildred's bank account, and was utterly disregardful of how he used her money. She felt keenly the failure of all her attempts at reforming her husband. She was in such a state of indecision that Aldine had threatened to write to her father, but her mother had prevailed upon her not to do so.

Up to this time he had never been cruel to Mildred to the extent that he had ever struck her.

But one night about seven o'clock he came home, staggering into the house in a maudlin state of intoxication.

He had sat down to the evening meal, but was entirely oblivious of his surroundings. As he sat with half closed eyes, mumbling and incoherently cursing, he crazily and suddenly sprang from his chair and grabbing a plate in his hand threw it at Aldine, barely missing her. At this juncture, George came running into the room. He had heard the uproar from the upstairs and surmising the cause, had grabbed a pistol lying upon a shelf where he had hid it only a few days before, anticipating the possibility of its use.

The insane man had now secured the carving knife and was advancing upon the boy's mother, with it raised in his hand, with curses and threats to kill her, and with irresponsible mind had endeavored to reach Mildred, who was making every effort to escape him.

It was at this time that George ran in, and seeing

the situation, hastily took aim and fired. The first shot missed, but upon the second shot being fired, Caldwell fell to the floor with a wound in his hip. The man, almost insensible even to his wound, lay upon the floor, hurling oath after oath at Mildred, and as he writhed upon the floor grated his teeth together as if mad.

Neighbors, hearing the shots, came running in. The police department was notified and soon the wounded man was taken away. Ascertaining that George had fired the shot, he was taken to the police station.

Mildred was frantic. Friends sought to quiet her and remained with her.

Aldine had disappeared at the time of George being taken away. Seeing that her mother was being taken care of, she hastily ran to a street car and rode to a telegraph station. She had made up her mind to do what should be done and promptly did it. She sent this message to her father:

"Come at once. George is arrested for shooting Caldwell while attempting to kill mother."

She knew that if the message were delivered within an hour her father could catch the train enabling him to reach N— by four o'clock the next morning. Having made arrangements for a night delivery, she hastened to return home.

Aldine could give no satisfactory explanation as to her absence, and, in fact, offered none. Her mission having been performed, she remained at the side of her mother.

It was not more than two hours after George had been arrested before he was released under bond given by the president of the bank where Caldwell had been cashier, and who had gone to the police station upon hearing of the shooting.

Upon his return, his mother literally smothered him with her embraces, so overjoyed was she to have him in her arms.

As the excitement gradually subsided, the little family was now left alone and it was late in the night before they retired. But there was one member of the household who did not intend to sleep, although she lay by the side of her troubled mother.

Her mother had passed into only uneasy slumber and frequently awoke.

At about five o'clock in the morning, Aldine heard carriage wheels at the front door. When she turned on the light and opened the door, there stood the answer to her message—her father. With just one cry of joy, she sprang into his arms.

Now there was a commotion upstairs. Mildred had been aroused by the door bell as had George.

"Aldine, Aldine; what has happened? Oh, what is the matter?" she asked.

"Oh, mother; it is just a man who wants to know all about what has taken place. He is a dear friend of mine and I think of yours. So dress and come down," the clever girl replied.

Hastily seating her father where he could not be seen easily, Aldine ran upstairs and urged her mother to dress and come down with her. She had now as-

sured her mother that it was a newspaper man who had called.

Finally, when Aldine came down leading her mother with George in the rear, she passed into the sitting room with her mother and suddenly turned on the light.

For the first time in fourteen years, Paul and Mildred were face to face.

For an instant their eyes met. Involuntarily there were impulsive exclamations upon the part of each of them. Mildred, already weakened and made nervous from all that she had passed through, was not prepared for the surprise of so suddenly seeing Paul. With a gasp she closed her eyes and was in the act of falling to the floor, when she was caught by the arms of Paul, who had rushed to her. Held securely by him, he looked into the face of the wife of his youth with a look of tenderness and solicitation.

For the brief moment his heart traveled swiftly back through the past.

When Mildred recovered her composure and found herself in his arms she was taken to a couch where she soon overcame her nervousness.

Finally, as she looked toward Paul, she said:

"But I do not understand."

"I do, mother!" exclaimed Aldine, and she recounted what she had done as to sending the message. "You see, I knew we needed someone who would protect us, and I knew who that someone was, and I just made him come. That's all there is to it."

"But tell me all about it," said Paul.

Aldine faithfully narrated the happenings of the evening before, concluding with dragging George to the light as she hugged him repeatedly.

Paul for the first time in fifteen years saw the boy. With a bound he had taken George into his arms. One glance instantly convinced him of the enormity of the wrong of years against his own son.

"Mildred, my God, Mildred; that *is my boy*. I know it because he looks like his father, and I know it because he was defending his mother. How I have wronged you both!" he cried as he again rushed to George and affectionately embraced him.

Back through the avenues of years he had taken but one great stride, but he was Paul, the just, the kind and honorable, again.

Of all the tears that Mildred had shed during the last fifteen years she now wept for joy and said:

"Paul, how I thank you for what you said in behalf of my boy."

"Now, let me add one thing to what Aldine has said. When I received the message, I immediately took it to Mary and showed it to her. Without one moment of hesitation she said, "Paul, your duty is there, and if you do not go, I could never forgive you. Go to them at once.' And how I must thank the kind God that I came." Paul uttered this statement with much feeling.

Paul now arose and walking over to Mildred took her hand in his, saying to her:

"Do not worry, Mildred; I will see that no harm

comes to George and I will stay until everything is as it should be."

As he spoke their eyes met and their hands tightened their clasp.

"Come now ,my boy, and go with your father and we will take a walk," he said addressing George.

It was the first time he had ever been so addressed, but the alacrity with which he sprang for his hat showed his youthful elation.

As they went out the door Paul heard Mildred say:

"Oh, Aldine, you angel of a girl!"

Upon reaching the police station, Paul was informed that it was feared Caldwell was dying, but the officer hastened to add that he was dying from a fit of alcoholism and not his wound, which was a trifling wound in the fleshy part of the thigh.

This was most glorious news, because if the unfortunate man died of alcoholism and not from his wound, George could not be held responsible for his death.

And true to the officer's prediction, the news came while Paul was yet there that Caldwell had died.

Much to his agreeable surprise, Paul was informed by the officer that George would remain under the bond already given until the inquest was held. This was the order of the district attorney who had been informed as to the cause of the death.

The inquest was held at two o'clock that day, and after a full hearing of all the evidence, George was exonerated from all blame as to the cause of death.

At the request of the grief-stricken mother, the

remains were taken in charge by relatives in her behalf and were interred the next day.

It was the same sad story of the faithful and forgiving mother moistening and enriching the earth of the newly-made grave, with tears of love for her boy whom liquor had killed. And the world knows that for every tear that falls from the mother's eye, a for-get-me-not will spring forth. But how tardy had been the world in preventing these tears being shed for the shame of the poor dead boy!

Mildred and the children were present at the funeral and burial ceremonies. She had shed tears of genuine grief over her dead husband, for until he surrendered to dissipation, he was so endearing himself to her, that he was in reality finding her heart.

There was no longer any excuse for Paul remaining. So after a most mysterious conference with Aldine, he had taken his train homeward.

He had witnessed the liberation of his boy and Mildred as well.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### SADDENED MEMORIES.

THE weeks following the death of her husband, left Mildred with an increasing despondency that she found it most difficult to overcome. True, indeed, it was, that to a more than great extent, she was released from the soul torture that she had encountered in the half crazed conduct of her husband. Yet, now that he was dead, with all of his erring tendencies and his neglect and mistreatment of her, her heart had never been unkindly toward him. She recalled, with no difficulty, that the real man had been lost in the violence of his dissipation, to which she alone attributed all of his misfortunes and the great change that had come over him. Remembering the urbane, chivalrous and proud Southerner that he was, when first she knew him, and when she married him, the contrasting transformation was pathetically plain and saddening to her. That he really loved her, she had never doubted and she had never failed in her respect for his regard for her, even though he had many times given the offense through the unfortunate affliction that had fastened itself upon him, that in justice might have forfeited all right to even respect from her. But

she had bravely borne it all with a fortitude and degree of stoicism, that after all had assumed the form of indifference. To her, suffering had been and become no stranger. Indeed, had her heart not ached with the sorrows and suffering of years! Even as she saw the fading manhood of Caldwell, and as she had felt the heavy hand of sorrow laid upon her with his weakness, somehow she had not the murmur of heart or mind that made her native pride rebel. Rather had she accepted it all as the lot that was justly hers, and as a cross that she was entitled to bear and carry.

Throughout all of this unhappiness—her daily anxieties, her fears and disappointments during the last year of Caldwell's life, she had been not only dutiful and tenderly affectionate toward him, but she truly endeavored to stay his tottering step toward the rapid ruin he so certainly approached. But she had merely seen the sad and oft-seen picture that hangs everywhere upon the walls of memory of the countless converted homes, to places of desolation through the world's greatest curse. She had been compelled to visit the art gallery of gloom, where the subject is the artist, where human tears and blood give the coloring and time is used as the paint brush with the wretchedness of drink urging on the scene painted.

There was revived by the coming and going of Paul, what once had been her own great happiness. Surely and certainly the curtain had plainly run up, revealing the dark hours of her own life. Again and

again, did she now hear the deafening roar of pistol shots ringing in her ears. As intensely and often as her heart had cried out for mercy as to the sufferings she had endured, yet it seemed that her agony must grow and her heart ache more than ever. She wished that she could not have seen Paul again—and to his coming she was attributing the reawakening of recollections she would fain make slumber.

Aldine, seeing her mother's condition of mind, had bravely attempted to console her. On occasions, she had found her in tears, at which times she would, with tenderest love, throw her arms around her and seek to drive away her sorrow, by her own lightheartedness and cheerfulness.

"I was thinking, dear child, that we might go to the Pacific Coast. There, you know, the climate is wonderful, and I am sure you and George would be delighted with it."

As her mother spoke it could easily be seen that there was a shade of disappointment flitting across the face of Aldine.

"But mother, dear, don't you think that is a dreadful distance away?" she asked.

"It is not too far to be from the scene of so much sorrow, Aldine."

Aldine's face now flushed with a telltale blush, that could not be mistaken.

"And yet, mother, it is such a long way from a living love, don't you think?" As Aldine spoke she knew her mother had half read her mind and heart.

Sometime since her mother had learned of a fast

growing regard for Aldine, upon the part of a young man by the name of William St. John from C., and though she never openly accused Aldine of any affection upon her part, the mother thought she divined Aldine's objections to her suggestion as to the change. Mr. St. John had met her at C. and had upon several occasions visited N. for the purpose of seeing Aldine. As a matter of fact, his attentions were approved by Paul and her mother.

Fondly kissing her daughter, the mother understandingly said:

"If my dear child has adopted this method of telling me her heart, the mother understands, and her heart is glad for you. You are right. It is too far from those you love. But there is no one but you and George who love me and I feel that no distance can now be too great away from this section for me."

Once upon returning home from the city, she had unexpectedly come upon her mother in her room when she had been weeping.

"Oh, my darling mother," she almost implored, "why must you let your dear heart suffer so? You must know that you cannot change conditions. You must surely realize that there is nothing that your grief can accomplish."

"My dear Aldine—my own precious child," she replied, "you can never know the heaviness of your mother's heart. God knows best, but it does seem that my share of sorrow has been more than endured."

"But mother, you should not take the death of

Mr. Caldwell so keenly to heart. Your grief for him will not help you. I feel that you should let time take care of conditions and that there should be a change in you. Won't you, my dear mother, for Aldine's sake, look at things in a more cheerful frame of mind?"

Aldine spoke to her mother with such affection that her mother felt its charm and influence. Taking her in her arms, she said to her:

"Your mother will never be happy anywhere, and we must leave here."

To this the daughter replied:

"Why, mother, do you know I was only waiting for an opportunity to say the same thing to you. I know you and all of us will be happier. I feel that what you said about going to the Pacific Coast would be delightful for all of us. And, mother, you know I would not let you go without me, anywhere. I love my darling mother better than anyone on earth and a great deal better than a red-headed man, anyway."

With this reply, she hugged her mother even into a smile as she referred to her auburn-headed admirer.

This ended the conversation for the time being, but afterwards Mildred, having definitely determined to leave N. informed Aldine of her resolution.

She was still possessed of a very comfortable fortune left by her mother, together with the liberal allowance which Paul had made her, and she had no hesitancy in facing the world in that regard. She felt, too, that she must now seek some means by which she could employ her mind. But she did not

feel as though she could have the heart to do or try anything with an effort in N. for the reason that her desire to leave had become a fixed determination.

Aldine had written her father of her mother's intentions. She had kept the fact from her mother. But she did inform her mother that her father desired George to visit him at C., which Mildred consented to.

It was after George had been with his father for several weeks and had returned, that arrangements were made to the effect that Aldine should remain at C. for a visit and that George should accompany his mother, it being agreed that Aldine should join them at Los Angeles in the following fall.

As a result, Mildred disposing of her personal property, consisting largely of household goods and furniture, in a few days left with George for California. Aldine, with many tears, had separated from Mildred and George a day or so before the mother left N. and had gone to her father.

"Sweet, dear mother, goodbye; something tells me that I should go with you," Aldine said to her mother.

"No, Aldine, George will watch over me. You will come to me later, dear one, my daughter. May God be with and watch over you when I cannot! Now you must catch your train. Goodbye," fondly spoke Mildred.

With one more embrace of her mother and a sister's goodbye to George, Aldine was soon speeding toward C. on her train.

When, a few days afterward, Mildred and George departed from N, there was some regret upon her part because she had made many friends who had been dear to her during her residence there. Yet she was always intuitively aware of the fact, that to some extent she had been avoided by many. She was by no means unmindful of the fact that a certain ostracism of her had taken place, due to the fact of her past life. She never failed to realize that it always followed her in some form or other—if not in discourtesies at the hands of others, surely always there was something that took her back in mind to every hour of her unhappy past.

God forgives, but the world neither forgives nor forgets.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### A NOBLE WOMAN.

HEN Aldine had reached C. her father met her at the station and drove her to his elegant home on Main street. His delight upon seeing her again was very evident. They were, indeed, both more than glad to see each other. As he put her suit cases in the carriage and gave the checks for her trunks to an expressman, he almost threw her into the carriage as he playfully lifted her off the ground.

His heart had concentrated all of his love upon her up to the time of his going to N. and as he viewed it, until he had seen George, he had thought there was no other entitled to share his love with Aldine. But it was not so now. Yet boundless as was his affection for his beautiful daughter before he had realized that George was also entitled to the great love which he now gave the boy, by no means did he love her less; but he felt keenly the injustice that had been done George, and was eager that reparation be made. From the moment he first saw him at N. his heart had felt the sincerity of greatest remorse and he chided himself for his own wrong. And, now, when he had been so convincingly satisfied of

his own mistake, he felt the increasing happiness and likewise the lessening of his own great sorrow.

As they started away from the station, there came running up to the carriage Mr. St. John, who greeted Aldine in the unmistakable manner of the admirer. After a few minutes of conversation, however, Paul interrupted the pair by saying good-humoredly:

"Now, look here, young man, you will have plenty of time to come and see this girl, but I want her now. You know the way, Will."

"If I don't, I could find it, Mr. Hanley," laughingly replied the young man as the carriage for the second time started.

As they drove away from the station, Paul lost no time in asking Aldine about George, carefully avoiding any inquiry as to her mother. She was quick to notice the omission and proceeded to intentionally omit any mention of her mother, though she told all about George that she knew and concluded by saying that George would leave on the following day for California.

When she had finished talking of George, she could easily sense her father's expectancy as to her mention of her mother. There was a distinct pause in the conversation, which she knew he would break, and which he did.

"And—how about—," he began and hesitated.

Aldine quickly looked up into her father's face; there was no mistaking it. She saw a tear roll down his cheek.

Reaching her right arm around him, Aldine said:

"Father!"

He turned his face toward her. They looked into each other's eyes. Yes, there were the tears without doubt. Not a word was said, but they understood each other. Finally, Aldine boldly said to her father:

"My dear father, do not try to deceive Aldine. She knows you wanted to know about mother and that is not all she knows, either."

By this time they had reached her father's home and as they drove up the entrance, Mrs. Hanley came to them.

Aldine saw that a great change had taken place in her. She noted the absence of color—and she saw what she took to be greatest ill health. She pretended not to have observed any change, however, and fondly kissed and embraced her, Mrs. Hanley returning her affection.

They had always been genuinely fond of each other from the beginning of their first acquaintance. Somehow, there had been a most mutual bond of sympathy between them. Aldine had early learned the many splendid womanly attributes of character she possessed. She had yielded to her kindness and tenderness of care almost as naturally as to her own mother.

And now as she quickly saw the invalid before her, it grieved her intensely. As they walked into the house she observed plainly, the feebleness of her step and put her arm around her as if to assist her. Upon reaching the inside, Mrs. Hanley had gone

with Aldine to her room. When they reached the room and Aldine had sat down Mrs. Hanley lay down upon a couch with some eagerness, as she thought.

Aldine went to her and kneeling by her and taking her hand in her's, said to her:

"You look so tired, dear Mrs. Hanley. Are you not feeling well?"

"No, dear, I have not been well for several days. I am much better, however, than I have been and the doctor thinks I will improve rapidly from now on. Tell me, dear child, about your mother and George," she replied.

Aldine faithfully told her all about her mother and George going away from N. to California.

"The poor dear woman has all my sympathy in all of her troubles, and I am of the opinion she is exercising good judgment. When Paul received your telegram, he brought it to me. I told the dear man he must catch the first train to all of you. I was, indeed, glad and so was he that he went."

"You dear, good woman! How I love you for that kind heart of yours," cried the young girl in response.

Strange as was the friendship of these two, their hearts seemed to respond to each other with easy accord. For several moments, Aldine remained kneeling by the side of the woman who had held her mother's place, Mrs. Hanley, soothing and consoling her. The picture is and was out of the ordinary, unusual, and seldom seen; but it is and was one of

many scenes enacted and made possible by the charm and nobility of womanhood when clean and pure hearts meet.

When finally they came down the stairway, there was no trace of any emotion observable, as Paul met them and led them to a couch where he sat between them.

Aldine began to learn that she was a more than welcome guest. Always in the presence of her father's great love for her, she knew, too, that she had won a place in the heart of his wife, who really intensified the warm welcome of her father by her added kindness. Her every comfort and wish were lovingly provided and gratified. Though in the days and weeks that followed, she longed for her mother and George, her entertainment was lovingly looked after by her father, his wife and Mr. St. John.

She, like her mother, was fond of horseback riding and spent much of the days upon the back of a horse her father had bought for her. On the occasion of her jaunts over the country roads, she was accompanied by her father, but often, to be sure, by Mr. St. John, who claimed very much of her time. Aldine was a graceful rider and thoroughly enjoyed the great pleasure thus afforded her.

Though the scene of and in the little town where the tragedy had been enacted which had so darkened and blasted the very life's happiness of her mother, Aldine had fortunately escaped the cruelty of learning the cause of her mother's sorrow. Marvelous as it may seem, the kindness of fate had spared the

visitation of such a punishment upon her, though the constant fear pursued both father and mother on this account.

Happy in her ignorance of all that had taken place in the years that had gone by, she was a most fortunate girl—and much to the great credit of all evil tongues that might have yet survived the past in C., she never had the arrow of poison fired into her love for her mother.

Mr. St. John was not only an accepted suitor, but the engagement of the couple was made known to the father, to which he most willingly assented. Mr. St. John had insisted upon an early marriage, but Aldine had withheld an answer until she could write to her mother fully acquainting her with his wishes in that regard. When the answer came, it was characteristic of her mother. She would in no wise stand in the way ofher daughter's happiness, but preferred that Aldine should visit her first. So it was arranged that Aldine should go to her mother upon a visit and return in September, at which time the wedding should take place. This arrangement met with the approval of her father, who strongly encouraged Aldine to do as her mother wished.

As a result, Aldine immediately planned her trip to Los Angeles and in a week was speeding to her mother.

Before her departure, her father had talked earnestly with her as to what he wished to do for George, knowing that what he said must be addressed to her mother. He had given her to under-

stand that while he did not wish to deprive her mother of the companionship of George, yet that he wished to send him to some reputable university selected by her mother. And for that purpose he had entrusted a very substantial check to her to be delivered to her mother for George, though he knew of Mildred's being amply able to supply all needed means for the boy.

"You must tell George that wherever his mother may wish him to go he must go. By all means, he must attend some good university."

This was said by Paul to Aldine in the presence of his wife. Aldine was quick to notice the significant glance of Paul's wife toward her father, but the good woman readily gave her expressed sanction of that which her father had been saying.

"Yes, indeed; his mother should be the one to make the selection," Mrs. Hanley added.

There was no more said upon the subject, though her father almost immediately advanced toward his wife and put his arm around her with such eloquent tenderness that it seemed to be in appreciation of what she had said. There was a pause in the conversation after this—and soon they got into the carriage on their way to the station.

After Aldine had entered the coach of the long train after a most affectionate leave-taking, she stood upon the rear end of the last car waving her goodbyes as the train was moving slowly away.

# CHAPTER XXIX.

## IN THE LAND OF THE ANGELS.

AFTER crossing the Rockies and traversing the hot desert lands intervening and entering the vicinity of the Pacific Coast of Southern California, the traveler is suddenly made aware of that most delectable and magic change of climate, which is the munificent gift of God and the great asset of Los Angeles. And as the travel-stained and weary tourist alights from his train at any of her railway stations, there is the suddenness of transition that inspires admiration that is life lasting.

With only slightly varied temperatures throughout the year, and with a climate that has made of that city the far-famed reputation of being the winter and summer resort of the nation—where nature has made of it the perpetual flower garden with its golden sunshine of more than three hundred days in the year, well might it have been consistently called "The Land of The Angels."

Truly, here is one section where the desert has been made to "bloom like the rose." There is a suburb of this beautiful city, Pasadena, where on New Year's day there is had the magnificent flower parade of many miles in length, called "The Tourna-

ment of Roses." On that day of every year, one may see hundreds in bathing at Long Beach, not far from Los Angeles, and then taking a car that literally plows its way through lanes of the flowered kingdom, can in less than two hours witness this magnificent pageant of flowers and in less than another hour find himself in the coldness of midwinter and its deep snows upon Mt. Lowe—all on the same day. Nowhere can vegetation be found more luxuriant. Nowhere the balminess of the day nor the inviting coolness of night. It is the health and pleasure resort and playground of the whole country. With its modernization of architecture and building, and with what nature has done for it, supplemented by man's labor, it is one of the most beautiful cities of the world. If it be true that the angels founded the city it is quite certain, however, that there has been a complete exodus of all the original founders—but the climate is still there.

Perhaps no place in this country is so much frequented by strangers and the tourist element as this most remarkable city. Throughout the entire year, the climatic conditions are such that it is difficult to decide whether the advantages and attractions of the climate are greater in winter or summer. Certain it is, however, that it has made it a most popular resort during all seasons. When the summer months come a large proportion of the population finds its way to the many resorts at different points upon the coast ostensibly on account of the heat, but as a matter of fact there is but little, if any, difference in the

temperature at any of these beach resorts as compared to Los Angeles, which is inland about twenty miles.

There are other reasons for it being a most exceptional city. Its people can scarcely find their equal anywhere. Every man, woman and child is a self-constituted committee of one to point out all the glories of their state and particularly their city. No more adept advocate could be found, either. From the time the stranger registers at his hotel, his invitations to take an auto trip over the magnificent roads of the country, through the orange growing section, are numerous, indeed. The average tourist usually accepts these kind proffers of courtesy, although he knows full well that it is the hope of a real estate deal being made that prompts them. As mile after mile is traversed, the visitor marvels at the never-ending scenes of beauty that meet his eye. He sees the orange groves, the lemon groves, the walnut groves, vineyards that reach beyond his vision—he sees the luxurious vegetation and flowers. But if perchance, the guest should grow enthusiastic as to all that nature has done by reason of the climate, your guide will not forget to very promptly say to you:

"Yes, but look how man has transformed a great desert into a thing of beauty as well as the most productive land in the world, by furnishing it with water."

Theoretically the average citizen might begrudgingly admit that God had some little to do in furnish-

ing the water for irrigation and other purposes, but after hearing the average booster talk, one would rather incline to the view that the Californian would come first in the "Hall of Fame," if it were left to him to do the picture hanging on this subject. One never gets done hearing and reading that:

"We spent forty million dollars in getting our drinking water two hundred miles from here by means of our acqueduct."

This is not said in a boastful way, either, but rather with the same sang froid with which he might speak of the most trifling accomplishment. He will speak of *"developing"* water just as if he really created it. To the new comer, this kind of "boosting" seems ludicrous, at first; but he would not be a citizen of more than three months, before he finds himself thinking, talking and writing in the same way. You cannot tell the difference between the native son and the year-old citizen. If the sunshine is not always up to the tourist's expectation, there is always an obliging citizen at your elbow, who anticipates your unspoken comment, by telling you that the cloudy weather is "very unusual." If it rains and you cannot get out of your hotel, by proprietor and bell boy, you are always informed of the rain being "unusual." And so it goes. Everything that is pleasant and agreeable, is commonplace and to be expected; but if anything goes wrong it calls for the same comment,—"It is very unusual."

But, indeed, with greatest patriotism, energy and intelligence, the citizenship deserves all credit they

claim,—for it is being made one of the greatest states of the republic.

It was to this section that Mildred and George had come. Remaining in Los Angeles for a short time after their very long journey, a suitable cottage had been secured on the ocean side at a little resort about twenty miles from the city, where they had lived for more than three months. With the sea breeze salt infected, as it is, pure air and plenty of sunshrine—far removed from the scene of all of her troubles, the effect upon the unfortunate woman was most noticeable, and she began once more to look with some degree of philosophy upon conditions that surrounded her. She began to take a more active interest in passing events. She realized that the change was most beneficial to her as well as to George, who had become a most enthusiastic patron of bathing sections of the beach.

When Aldine alighted from the train at the station she found her mother and George, eagerly rushing to her side. She had wired her mother as to the time she would arrive and was anxiously expecting them. The faces of all radiated with the joy of being together again. With the greetings and embraces of love that she received from mother and brother, she was made to feel and know, as she had always known, how deep and tenderly intense was the love that was bestowed upon her and as near as could be, there was happiness brought to all of the little family by her coming.

Aldine was fortunate in receiving much of her

mother's beauty, with her dark hair and lustrously black eyes. Then, too, she had thatsame erect figure and carriage possessed by Mildred—and despite the years of suffering Mildred had undergone, the stranger would scarcely have taken them for mother and daughter, time having dealt so kindly, after all, with Mildred.

After arranging for the forwarding of Aldine's baggage, the trio were soon enabled to get a car taking them directly to the cottage at the ,beach where Mildred and George had been spending the summer.

It was Aldine's first view of the ocean; and as she stood for the first time looking at the surging waves of the sea breaking into the whitened surf as it sprayed the shore, she was transfixed wtih the awe, we all feel on similar occasions. Fascinated into that most natural silence and admiration, the great and magnificent picture never fails to create on first sight, the beautiful girl stood with her arm around her mother looking into the boundless space beyond, where they saw the grandeur of the setting sun. Silence reigned between the pair for several seconds. Aldine was the first to speak when she most seriously turned and said to Mildred:

"Mother, how can any one behold the grandeur of the sea, in all of its magnitude, and not believe that there is a God?"

In the days and weeks that followed the arrival of Aldine, many trips were taken through the country,

to the nearby mountains and upon the ocean. It was all so refreshingly new and strangely beautiful that there was no limit to the great enjoyment afforded. There was a marvelous change for the better in the health of all and particularly did Aldine gladly notice the effect being produced upon her mother. She thought she could discern that she was yielding herself to a change that brought smiles, and there could be no mistaking it, some of the great sorrow she knew her mother felt was being for the time forgotten, and at least lightened as time went on into days and weeks that passed by.

Often had Aldine advised with her mother as to the proposal of Mr. St. John. As she had written, her mother in no way, sought to hinder or interfere with her daughter's contemplated marriage. She had been satisfied from what Aldine had confided to her that he was a most worthy young man and of a most highly respected family and she felt assured that he would be a most devoted husband, just as he had been an admirer.

Mildred, of course felt keenly the realization of the fact that so soon she would become permanently separated from her Aldine, and often the tears would come as she discussed the subject or even contemplated it.

Upon a given occasion, while they were seated upon a projecting rock at the ocean side looking out upon the ocean, mother and daughter had frankly and with great confidence, discussed the subject with much finality. Aldine had been feelingly expressing

her regret that she must be separated from her mother, when Mildred replied to her by saying:

"Yes, my dear child, your mother's heart aches when she realizes that the time will come for us to part; but you must know that the love of the mother must find and make sacrifice upon the occasion of her daughter's marriage. For after all, your happiness will become and always be mine. Every mother must undergo the same unhappy event sooner or later. And when I am so fondly hoping and expecting that you will be made a happy woman by your coming marriage, my own heart tells me that the fountain of your love will bring eventual pleasure and happy contentment to me."

"Dear mother!" Aldine exclaimed, as she nestled into her mother's arms. "How much you love your Aldine! I know that you will suffer and be lonely when I am gone. And mother, how can I leave you?"

With her head upon her mother's breast she could not but realize her mother's resulting solitude. Her mother replied to her after some moments, by gently saying:

"Come, come, my sweet child, you must not feel that way. You must look forward to the happiness that will be mine, as well as yours, when you are bound to the one you love. It is love's beautiful decree that you must follow your heart."

Hesitating, she continued with much feeling:

"Darling Aldine, the greatest accomplishment and attainment of a good woman is the giving of her hand

and heart to the one she loves, with the fidelity that time can never disturb. The womanly honor which she pledges must be unswerving and unassailable. Whatever may be the desolation of the moment or hour, the unchangeable woman and motherhood should never forget the duties she owes herself, her own and her God."

As she spoke, it was evident to Aldine that Mildred was most seriously and visibly affected by what she was saying, causing her to look up suddenly into her mother's face.

Just then, George came to them, and the mother and daughter arose from where they were sitting. Nothing more was said by either of them, thanks to the timely arrival of George.

It was in after years that Aldine learned the significance of her mother's words and tears.

As they walked away from the cliffs, George was walking several feet in advance, holding a letter behind him without saying anything as to whom it was addressed or for. Aldine was observing his conduct and hastily dashed forward to get the letter. George had playfully prepared for and anticipated her, and immediately broke and ran toward the highway with Aldine pursuing him. As the brother and sister ran up the hillside she could hear the teasing and mocking laughter of the boy and the sister's demands for the letter. Mildred paused and, for the moment, as she saw them reach the crest of the hill, her's was the smile of love and her face was that of

a woman whose heart pulsated in the fullness of her great devotion to her own.

But even as she looked, a great change came over her countenance. She was thinking that within a few days they would both be separated from her.

And what then? That was the mental query as she slowly took the direction of her children. She was contempalting what the future had in store for her, in what she knew would be the absoluteness of loneliness.

When Mildred reached the cottage she found Aldine reading her letter from "Her red-headed sweetheart," as George proclaimed.

It was now about the middle of August, and preparations were being made for the departure of Aldine and George for the East.

Mildred had very readily assented to the desire of the father as to George attending some reputable university. Though her inclination, at first, prompted his attending some institution near her, she yet felt that there was justice in his going east, because she realized the uncertainty of her stay in Los Angeles. Then, too, she was familiar with the high standard held up at Ann Harbor, Mich., and she had selected this as the college George should attend.

As she, day after day, in company with her children, made the numerous purchases for a young lady who was about to be married and with the many visits to the dressmaker, as well as procuring the neecssary equipment for George, great effort was required that she could successfully conceal the real

emotions that were constantly besieging her. Yet, with necessary courage, she kept down the heart and brushed away the tears, and entered upon the discharge of her duties as though it gave her the greatest pleausre.

When the time came for their leave-taking, and when the trunks and other baggage had been checked, mother and children told each other fond farewells of love with many embraces. As they waved at the mother as the train slowly pulled out, they little knew the heaviness of the heart of the loving mother as she responded bravely to their last signals of dear good-byes, nor did they dream of all the future had in store for them or her in the events so soon to follow.

The kaleidescope of fate, as it is gently jostled by the hand of time, holds in store the combination of circumstances which constituting events, make or unmake ourlives, seemingly without our having influence upon that which takes place, in the slightest sense or degree.

The principals of my story found that combination in the events of the concluding chapters.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### THE CHIME AND TOLL OF BELLS.

ALDINE and George had reached C., after a most enjoyable journey of five days and were more than welcomed by their father and his wife, as the train pulled into the station.

After a rest of a day or so, they were entertained by him in proportion to his great love for them.

Father and son appeared to be almost inseparable, and Paul's ambition to win the love of the boy was plainly evident. And in his efforts to do so, he was pleasingly successful. George had easily learned to love his father, from the very beginning. Many times he was prompted to learn the cause of his never having been able to see his father before the time of his coming to N., but he never spoke to him concerning the matter, and he remained in ignorance of the great cloud that had so signally hovered over his young life. While he felt and knew of their estrangement and separation when he was a mere child, his mother had never blamed his father to either of the children, and much less did she ever intimate the cause of their legal separation. Paul plied the boy

with many most natural questions as to his mother, and he had gone much into detail as to his mother's life in Los Angeles, but in all of their conversations the father very naturally refrained from any mention of their married life.

After remaining in C. for about a week, George left one day for Ann Arbor to attend college, with the love of all, wishing him a successful and agreeable collegiate year.

Plans and preparations for the coming marriage of Aldine to Mr. St. John in the latter part of the month, were now being made. He was a most frequent visitor during all this time. He had early indicated his wish for a wedding to be of a most public nature and was insistent upon such an arrangement, but Aldine had demurred to his prpoosal, because of her mother's advice upon the subject. At first, her father supported the contentions of the young man. He was so proud of her, that like Mr. St. John, he had favored the church wedding, but when he learned the cause of Aldine's opposition, he very readily acquiesced in his daughter's plans.

In the meantime, the health of Mrs. Hanley had undergone a very decided change for the worse, and genuine alarm was being felt by Paul and Aldine. The attending physician was now a daily visitor, and though he had explained that there was nothing particularly serious as to her condition, yet it was apparent that she was a very sick woman. She was always quick to assure her husband that she really was not

seriously ill—and to insist that she did not require or need medical treatment, and when Aldine had suggested the wisdom of a postponement of the wedding she very promptly objected and insisted that no delay should take place as to the time which had been agreed upon.

The good woman seemed to take a very great interest in the coming event, and became quite active in assisting Aldine with her necessary preparations. So helpfully attentive did she become, that for the time being she impressed even the doctor with her apparent improvement, as well as convincing Paul.

So, with only a few invited guests, there was a quiet wedding of the happy couple at Paul's home. And on the evening of the same day bride and groom boarded a train for a somewhat extended bridal tour through the east, after the usually profuse felicitations of many well-wishing friends, who had learned of the marriage.

Paul had lovingly watched the taking away of his daughter, and there were tears in his eyes as he heard the words of the minister. As he stood listening to the sentences that joined the couple, his emotions emanated from not only the love he bore his daughter, but memory was taking him back to a similar occasion when he, too, had placed the wedding ring upon the finger of Aldine's mother. He now recalled the plighted vows of that event, when he had walked down the aisle from the altar, with lovely Mildred upon his arm, as his wife! But, as he went back in memory to that day, how he recalled the stain-

ing of his own escutcheon! How he had early forgotten and blurred promise and vow, when this daughter was at the breast of the mother. How he afterwards had gone out into life to fight its battles with broken sword and promise!

One might easily have thought that it was the fatherly interest in the daughter that had brought the welling tears, but there was one at his side who read his very soul and who saw into his bleeding heart. His more than noble companion, his wife, knew that not all of his tears were for the daughter.

Before leaving C., Aldine had not failed to send a short wire announcing her wedding and happiness to the mother in t he distant west.

Upon the return of Paul and his wife to their home she had complained that she was not feeling as well as usual and the doctor had been summoned before they had retired. He had come and had given her some relief by means of tablets which he had her take. Afterwards she had gone to her room, apparently much relieved, leaving Paul and the doctor in the sitting room below.

After leaving them in conversation, several minutes elapsed as they sat alone. The doctor closed the door leading into the hall and drawing his chair close to Paul, said to him:

"Mr. Hanley I do not wish to unnecessarily alarm you, but I think the time has come when I should be perfectly frank with you as to your wife's condition. For quite a while I have been concerned about her. I had hoped for a change for the better and had

resorted to every known treatment of her malady, awaiting expected results; but now, I feel it my duty to tell you of the failure of all remedies."

"Do you mean to say, doctor," Paul asked with great alarm, "that her condition is a threatening and dangerous one?"

"Yes, I must tell you that your wife is afflicted with so serious a weakness of her heart that she can never recover. Her trouble is organic, and I fear nothing can be done. She may survive for many weeks, and she might live for a year, but she is gradually succumbing to her ailment."

"But, doctor, is there no possible hope that you can give me? Is there not something that can be done?" asked Paul with trembling voice.

"None, my good man. Rest and quietude may prolong her life, only for a short while. You must be prepared for the inevitable." As the doctor spoke he had placed his hand upon Paul's shoulder, whose head was now bent into his hands covering his face.

Paul had thought for sometime that his wife's illness was of serious consequence, but had accepted the first assurance of the doctor that it was only temporary and that she would soon recover. He was not prepared for the announcement now made, which cast him into the greatest dejection.

It was many hours after the doctor had gone, that Paul remained restlessly pacing back and forth in the library with his disconsolateness. Now and then he

would give way to silent grief and then drop into a chair and would rest his head in his hands upon the library table. His suffering had become intense, and with both heart and mind at bay, in the great gulf of his gloomy solitude, he cried out:

"Oh, God, have I not suffered enough? Is there no balm? No release from endless sorrow?"

When finally, he noiselessly found his way up the stairway and to the bedside of his sleeping wife, he stood for a moment looking down into her face and then silently stole out of the room to his own bed of wakeful hours throughout the rest of the morning.

When a consultation was held by the physicians during the week, there was but little encouragement held out to Paul as to his wife. In reality, the result was a verification of the opinion of his family physician. Both had agreed that there was no substantial relief to be had and that the duration of her life was entirely problematical. They had advised Paul that she must not be made aware of how critically ill she was and must be allowed but little exertion of any character.

With his having been now thoroughly convinced of the impending fate that awaited his wife, Paul summoned all of his courage to avoid her appreciating the gravity of her illness. He had always been solicitously attentive to her throughout her ailment, and to conceal the added anxiety and depression that now became more pronounced as the days went by, he felt was a more than difficult task.

He was not absent from her an hour at a time.

Tenderly assisting her up and down the stairs, cautiously guarding against any unnecessary exertion, always at her side to hand her a book or to give her any attention she might require, his watchfulness could not fail to have been noticed by her. But she never at any time permitted him to think that she had thought his devotion more than usual. And, indeed, he had long before her health began to fail her, always been the courteous and kind husband that he now was. She had never had cause to complain of his treatment of her. But it was the greater anxiety so plainly depicted in his face and evidenced by his every act when near her, that made her readily discern his mental worry. She had, without difficulty divined the result of the doctors' consultation. She reasoned that the failure upon the part of any one to impart the result of the conference, was the strongest of all evidence that she was considered to be in gravest peril.

When November came, she had ceased, entirely, to leave her room.

After consultation with the doctor he summoned Aldine by wire, who was then at Ashville, N. C., to come at once.

When Aldine and her husband arrived, she sat up in bed and affected a liveliness of spirit, and with an expression of great love and affection, welcomed them. Indeed, their coming seemed to have a most marvelous effect upon her. And as Aldine daily sat near her with the tenderness of such genuine love as the dear girl bore her, there came into her eyes a look of satisfaction that bordered upon serenity.

One afternoon, shortly after the arrival of Aldine, the nurse summoned Paul from the library, telling him that Mrs. Hanley wished him to come to her. When he reached the room, she indicated to the nurse that she wished to be alone with her husband. Paul had taken a seat by her side.

"Paul," she began, "my dear husband, I am soon to pass away. I have known for some time that"—and here she paused as if from weakness—"I would never survive."

Paul now knelt at the beside, and as she had thus spoken, sought to restrain his wife and taking her hand in his, said:

"No, no, do not—I beg of you, do not," and the strong man here gave way to the emotion he had so long suppressed. For sometime he yielded himself without restraint. He leaned over and kissed her. He put his arms around her and raised her to him. He suffered, and was calmed only by the feeble woman as she lay back upon her pillow. Placing one hand upon his she began again to talk to him.

"Dear Paul," she said, "I know how your great heart has attempted to conceal from me my condition. But I did not need to be told of it. I know now, that I am soon to be taken to my God. I am not afraid and am ready to die. But, strong and noble hearted man, I have some things to say to you before the curtain is drawn. I am feeling stronger, today, and felt that I could best speak now. Dear Paul, you have been all that any husband could

ever have been. My thoughts of you as a noble, brave hearted man have grown into a conviction that could never be changed. My last heart beat shall be with my admiration and love for you. You have been kind and you have been just. And now, my dear husband, as I am about to face my Maker, I am going to appeal to your great sense of justice to do that which your dying wife requests and begs of you. I look back to the time when you took beautiful Mildred as your wife—the dear mother of Aldine. You know how pure and true she was when she became yours. You loved her then, and she loved you; and if you had been the faithful husband you have been to me, your's would have been happy lives. But you went wrong first my dear,—and you killed her love for you. But Paul, I am not childing you. I know that time has taught you your own great wrong to her. You love her now, because you are just. I would love you less, if I thought you did not care for the poor girl out on the coast whose heart has suffered so. And now, my dear Paul, when I am gone I want you to go to her like the man you are, and offer again the love that has never died. Do it, Paul, for my sake. Promise me, Paul, dear Paul, you will do this for me—for me. Ask her to forgive you and forgive each other. Answer me, dear Paul, answer me!"

As she had spoken the last words her voice had changed to almost a whisper. It was evident that she was experiencing great excitement.

Paul hastily called the nurse and Aldine who im-

mediately came into the room. Paul raised her in his arms. He spoke to her saying:

"Mary, dear Mary, look at me!"

Her eyes opened and she attempted to put her hand to his face, but her arms fell upon his breast. Paul had bent over her. As he did so, she opened her eyes and he could faintly hear the one word:

"Promise—"

In a moment more his wife was dead in his arms.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

SOME months had passed after the death of Paul's wife.

The lessening of the natural sorrows that oppress so heavily at the time of their infliction, is as a rule, the certain accomplishment of time's intervention. There is a kindness emanating from God's wisdom, that whatever may be the intensity of greatest grief by reason of the death of another, unassuageable as it may seem, that finds its way as an accompaniment of time that not only lessens but makes disappear desolation and impenetrable gloom. Standing at the bedside of some near and dear one when the uninviting and cheerless future seems to drape itself with the borders of sorrow, the human mind is prone to forsake all hope and surrender as a victim to the throes of despair. But as the finger of time slowly traverses the dial of the days that follow, the graciousness of the gift of hope will open the window through which comes the gradual rays of sunshine of freshened inspiration. What may seem to be the visitations of the troubles and afflictions from God, over which we have no control, wear away

with the coming of time, with the gentleness of His tender mercies.

But the woes of our own creation live and flourish in memory and thrive with brooding, oft times, throughout the long lives that we live. The self imposed burdens that result from indiscretion become and remain heavy as does the quickening of conscience unerringly draw its indictment for the sins we commit. Self inflicted wounds that are the results of our own conduct, are the ones that linger longest, and that are the most difficult to heal.

When Paul was overwhelmed on account of the loss of his wife, it had seemed to him that his sorrow would be endless. With full recogntion of the unquestionable fact that throughout the years of their married life, her influence over him was so vastly beneficial in bringing about a strong reformation of himself; appreciating the more than splendid womanly qualities and graces which she possessed and realizing also, the unbounded love which her heart had always given him, he keenly and genuinely mourned her death. He had become a solemn and serious faced man, taking but little interest in passing events and being much given to solitude. Removed very largely from the companionship of former friends, his dejection and loneliness were ever present. Yet, with the passing of months, the dark cloud, hovering over him by reason of his great loss, began to gradually lift, just as the law of nature and reason compel. But as time's healing hand began to disseminate the one, there appeared upon his men-

tal horizon another cloud which had merely been displaced for the time being. There came to him, now, thoughts of his past life and of the great darkened chasm which the faults of his young manhood had created that ever made real happiness, an impossibility True, indeed, it was, that he had his children for whom his labor of love should grow in plans for their happiness; and yet as he contemplated for and thought of them, he felt his heart twinge with pain, when he realized how cruelly he had wronged his own brave boy! Ah, indeed, had he not the more than herculean task of making adequate reparation to George, for what injury he had inflicted upon him!

There came, too, recollections that pushed themselves upon him with haunting and spectre like effect, when he would be taken back into memory of his straying from the mother of his children. He began to have visions of the happiness he had imagined was his as he saw Aldine in the arms of Mildred—when he knew she was the devoted wife and mother. He mentally witnessed the tragedy of years of separation from his children, when they were entitled to a father as well as a mother. Reproaching himself with the erring life he had led while happiness reigned at his home and fireside, he was now asking himself many questions. But he could not bring himself to believe or reason that the mother of his children could ever have had the right or excuse to have been other than the chaste and undefiled.

Try as he did to avoid the infallible memories that

came crowding themselves upon him, he could not do so. He admitted his own great wrong as the first—but to forgive that which brought the stigma of shame, disgrace, and dishonor by reason of the fall of Mildred? *No, he never could. He never would.*

Reviewing as he thought, all of the events of his unhappiness, he invariably found the same conclusion, as he fought with the contending emotions uppermost in his mind.

Busying himself with the fortune his wife had left him and in putting into proper shape his property interests, Paul had much to occupy his mind. He was now the possessor of nearly a million dollars in property of various kinds in his state as well as interests in a large sugar cane plantation in Cuba. He devoted nearly all of his time to his business affairs and was glad that his time and mind could be so wholly occupied.

Paul had not forgotten the many charities created and kept alive by his wife; but took an active and keen interest in their continuance. In this, he was assisted by Aldine, who with endearing kindness to the poor, was of invaluable service to her father.

Immediately following the death of Mrs. Hanley, Aldine had written her mother the details of her death and she had written in reply expressing her regrets because of her death and not failing to express herself as to what a noble woman she must have been. She had made no mention of her mother's letters to her father, at the time, although he had subsequently asked about her. She had kept up a

regular correspondence with her mother and George and many times had expressed a great longing to be with her again.

Aldine's husband being possessed of considerable means himself had, together with her father bought some very valuable mining property in a nearby county and was very busily engaged in a development of it and therefore, necessarily absent from her much of the time. But she was almost constantly with Paul during his absence. She was a great consolation to him in her great love and they found themselves to be a most affectionate father and daughter. Watching over the household affairs for him, she had determined to bring as much of cheer to her father as possible, because for months she had noticed his great despondency, many times hearing him restlessly walking back and forth down in the library long after midnight. She was not slow to note her father's mental worry. At first, she very naturally and properly attributed it to the death of his wife, but as time wore on, she could see that there was some other cause of his great restlessness at night. On one occasion, she had thrown herself into his lap and with loving caress had boldly asked:

"Good and dear father, I want you to take your Aldine into your confidence and tell her why you are so much worried of late. Now, won't you, please do so, father?"

"Why, my dear girl," he replied, "do you not think your father has undergone sufficient sorrow to make him worry?"

"Yes, father, but it is only recently that you seem to be worried more than ever. You are too sensible to let grief grow upon you, although I know you lost one of the dearest women on earth."

Aldine was looking up into her father's face, looking for some evidence of his more recent troubles. Tactfully evasive as he was, he never disabused her mind of the impression she had.

"Come Aldine," he replied, "it is growing late and time for you to be in bed. Your father loves you too well to tell you all of his worries. But some day you may know."

Even though she felt that her father was taking that method of dismissing the subject, and keenly felt disappointed, she did not pursue theconversation further, and reluctantly though fondly kissed him a good night. As a verification of her own conjectures, she had heard her father up and walking down stairs, long after midnight, after she had left him. She felt some resentment that her father had refused her his confidence, and wondered with much curiosity as to what so seriously engaged her father's mind.

One evening, not long afterwards, returning home Paul found Aldine sitting in the library with a letter in her hand which she had been reading and it was plain to him that she was very much perturbed and that she bore evidence of weeping. Going to her, he took her in his arms and tenderly said to her:

"Why, what is it that ails my brave little girl? You have been shedding tears, Aldine. Tell your father what is the trouble."

Releasing herself from her father's embrace, she did not keep back the tears, that came and with a sob, she said:

"Oh, dear father, you cannot know how unhappy your Aldine is. I have just received a letter from my poor, dear mother. I cannot understand it. How sad and unhappy she must be! Read it, father, for you must help me to find her."

As she concluded, she handed the letter to Paul, who read the following:

"Los Angeles, Calif., May 8, 19—.

"My darling Aldine:

"By the time you will have received this letter, I will be gone from here.

"My dear child, your mother's heart aches and comes near breaking as she writes that which she knows may both surprise and pain you. But, my dear girl, though, you, more than any one have known of my saddened and unhappy life, you have never been taken into my heart and told of all the suffering and sorrow I have undergone. If I had ever esayed to do so, I could never have depicted it, but slightly, so great has it been in intensity—and I shudder, as I pray with a bleeding heart, that your own soul may not suffer, as has mine.

"Long ago, I have given up all hope of any possible happiness. I can see for myself, no future but that of everlasting sorrow. There is not one ray of sunshine left for your poor mother, whose tortures have been never ending. How often have I turned to the One against whom I have sinned, and with a con-

trite heart, pled for placation and forgiveness of my desolate and sinning soul. I have begged that He might show me the way and give me back some of the peace my soul would crave. But, dear girl, some of our sins are so deep that I feel that my yoke must be worn throughout life. That I merit all of my sorrow, I shall never deny.

"I shall offer, in my feeble way, a pennance. I can do no more. While I need not tell you what I shall engage in, it is sufficient that I say to you, my loved one, that I shall consecrate the rest of my life in employment that will assist in the relief of suffering. I leave here tonight, and as a member of the Red Cross, shall become a nurse.

"Do not grieve for me, too much. I shall always be kept conversant with the affairs of both you and George. And if your mother is ever really needed, she will appear.

"I have written to George, just as I do to you, asking him that he will forgive, as I ask you, if I am doing you an injustice. Above all, keep your dear heart warm and beating for your

"MOTHER."

As Aldine sat looking through her tears as her father read her mother's letter, she could see various emotions come and go over his troubled countenance. At times she fancied she could see him shrink, as if dodging, and wince, as if receiving severe blows. She was sure that she saw intense sadness. But, when he had finished, he merely handed her the letter, saying:

"Yes, Aldine, this is sad news for you. But your mother can, no doubt, be found."

His voice and manner really indicated no great interest, certainly not that which she expected. But if there were reserve or pretense of it, by the father, there was none by the daughter. With feeling and much spirit and some resentment, her great love for her mother never hesitated. She stood before Paul in all her young and beautiful womanhood not the girl any more, but with the full maturity of both mind and body, whose face, eyes and words bespoke the real loyalty of a love that halts and then challenges the attention and admiration of the strongest. With beautiful animation, she put her hand upon her father's arm and said:

"Yes, father, there is no doubt that she *can* be found, and there is no doubt but that she *will* be found, and there is no doubt but that my *dear father* will find her.

"You need not tell me, why you have been suffering so much of late. You cannot hide from me that which I have always known. *You love my mother.* I know now there must have been some dreadful sorrow that arose between you. I have never learned it, nor have I ever sought to do so. I have been content to know that I have loved you both. But, whatever it was that saddened your lives I know that my dear mother was *not all to blame.* If I hurt the heart of my dear, kind, and noble-hearted father, in saying as much, you must know she is *my mother*— I have nursed at her breast as a babe—I have looked

into that kindly and noble face of hers since I have become a woman, and I *know* that my mother is an angel of a woman. And my dear father, whatever the barrier, are you sure you were blameless? Forgive me, forgive me if I should wound you! But do you not see that I love her?"

"My dear child, you do not understand what you are——"

He was not permitted to finish any reply, before the strong girl, before him, said:

"Yes, but I *do* understand. I know that my father will go to my mother. I know that he will hunt for her until he finds her, for my sake and George's sake. And, dear father, I feel that there is some false pride or unjust reason that prevents you from going to her and telling her that you forgive her and asking her to forgive you. If the noblest man on earth will not find her, Aldine, who loves her, *will.*"

Great effort was being made by Paul to control himself. He both appreciated and admired the attitude of Aldine and much that she had said, had cut into his very heart. Caressing her with loving hand he spoke to her in that kindly manner, his affection prompted:

"My precious child, you must listen to your father. You do not know, though some day you will, nor can I tell you now, of the cause of the sorrow that has never been removed as to your mother and myself and we will not and cannot discuss it. But, Aldine, your father promises that for *your sake,* he will find your mother and that, too, at once. Dear one, you know

that I have always adored you and, now I want you to have confidence in the justice of your father. Let him think over many things before he speaks further upon this subject, and perhaps, he might be able to tell you something that can be done by the coming of the morning. So dear child, go to your rest, and leave me to my own thoughts for the night."

They affectionately separated, she going to her room and to bed while he remained in the library.

Paul Hanley bravely wrestled as he had many times before, with the one great question ever pursuing him, throughout the long hours of the night. His memory took him, unfailingly, to the scenes of his first love. He traversed every avenue of his and Mildred's happiness and he did not spare himself, as he mercilessly lashed himself with punishment for having first destroyed the picture of happiness so ineffaceably impressed upon his heart and mind. Now, with Aldine's words ringing in his ears as well as the last request of his faithful wife, he asked himself the question, if after all, the following of hsi own sense of obligations and duty toward Mildred would have avoided all his now great unhappiness. He could not escape the result of applying his sense of justice. He knew that he had struck the first blow. What was his duty? His duty to Mildred—to his and her children and to himself? He dared not deny that which the proud girl had made to sink deep down into his heart.

But as he thought over and over in his mind the various and sad phases of all that confronted him—with the precedent of the world, with all of its

cruelties, that scorn which would await him with the never finished sneers it provides as against the woman who had thus sinned and against the man who would reclaim her, he faltered. He felt the battle raging in his mind, was now making his heart stand against what the world might say. He feared for her sake and his own—and was wondering if he had the courage to face the world with that bravery necessary to take up the broken threads of life where they had been left off and successfully begin anew.

He saw the first grey streaks of dawn, as he struggled in the meshes of indecision. As he sat with the coming of the morning he fought on with wearied body and soul. With drooping eyelids, when slumber assailed, he heard the first faint note and call of some song bird that had been aroused by the silent coming of the day. Then, too he heard the answering reply of another, and still another, until hundreds of little throats were responding to the call for the morning song and chorus as they greeted the coming of the morning sun, that so soon afterward, streamed into the library through the east window. Sitting there and alone, he began to interpret the music which fell upon his ears. It all seemed to be for his own heart. As he listened, he felt the peacefulness of the hour. He thought he could hear the carroling of joys and happiness as the messages of good will to the world. He felt the touches of Nature's peace-fingered hand—of kindness and of the love that came from Him. Perched on the branch of a tree near the window, he could see a bird and his mate. The

one seemed to sing his song of love to the other. Suddenly, there came, the great yearning—the persistent longing—the heartache and cry of his revived and mighty love for Mildred.

He sprang to his feet. His eyes shone with the zeal of a newly born influence. The battle was over. Aldine's words had turned the tide and she had won for him. He hastily ascended the stairway and made directly to the bedside of the beautiful girl as she peacefully slept through the morning hours.

As he reached her side, she awoke and looked into his face.

"Why father!" she startlingly cried.

Her father reached down and taking her into his strong arms, and with his face radiating with joy and happiness, answered her look of surprise by saying to her:

"Aldine, I have concluded to hunt for your mother —*but for my own sake, first.*"

That was all that he said. He could not have said more if he had tried. They both understood. Locked in each other's arms, there were tears of joy for some minutes before a word was spoken.

Before Paul arose from his own bed, many hours afterwards he fancied he could hear the birds singing out in the trees, again; but as he listened, he found he was mistaken.

He had heard the voice of Aldine as she was singing the happy hours away.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### THE LONG SEARCH.

LEAVING Aldine at C. with greatest confidence as to his ability to soon ascertain the whereabouts of her mother, Paul immediately had prepared for a journey to California. Before he departed from C., however, he had wired authority to a detective agency at Los Angeles to make all investigations necessary for the purpose of locating her. He had received a response to one of his messages before he had left C. informing him that there was no trace to be had as to Mildred other than that she was last seen at Los Angeles on the day that Aldine's letter had been mailed by her. He was utterly at a loss to know or form any definite plan as to how the search should be prosecuted. Without knowing why, however, he found himself racing across the continent, indulging in the hope that something might be learned at her former home as to where she had gone.

Upon his arrival at Los Angeles and upon the occasion of an early visit to the detective agency he had employed, he was much disappointed that there was not some clue that had been found that would lead to the knowledge useful in his undertaking.

Inquiry had been made of the post office authorities to ascertain, if possible, any address to which her mail should be delivered, but whether or not it was contrary to the postal regulations to give out such information, no satisfaction was obtained from that source. Neighbors, as well as the landlord who had rented the furnished cottage, were unable to shed any light upon Mildred's disappearance. All Red Cross societies appealed to, were equally disappointing, there having been no person of her name that had either joined or had in any way been connected with the organization.

After several days of persistent search, without results, through information secured at the railway ticket office, it was learned that a through ticket and pullman berth to New Orleans had been secured by a lady answering the description of Mildred, and had been used on the date of the letter that had been written to Aldine. Upon learning as much, Paul at once started for New Orleans.

While on a pullman, en route, over the Southern Pacific Railroad, Paul had engaged the porter in conversation seeking any knowledge he might gain of Mildred. He was agreeably surprised to learn that there could be no doubt as to her having taken passage at the time he had surmised. The porter had been upon that train to New Orleans. The description given was so accurate in every detail that there could be no mistaking that he was upon the right track, when the porter, concluded his description by saying:

"Boss, she was a fine looking lady; but she was jest so quiet like, she neveh talked to nobody—jes seemed to be looking out de window, all de time!"

Upon reaching New Orleans four days afterwards, Paul, at once placed the search in the hands of a most reliable agency and repeated, substantially, efforts made at Los Angeles.

In the meantime, he wired Aldine of having traced her mother to that city, giving his address at H—— hotel while there.

Upon his return to his hotel that night, after unavailing efforts during the day, he received a telegram from Aldine, surprising him with the information that a letter had been received from her mother, postmarked at C. At first, Paul was puzzled upon learning this fact, but he felt assured that Mildred would not have gone to C. Upon the contrary, he knew that she was bent upon avoiding not only that section, but every one who might be there. Accordingly, he quickly reasoned that some one at C. must have been in correspondence with Aldine's mother and had evidently mailed the letter there under the directions of the writer. Without conclusion, he had debated in his mind as to who might be her confidant, but of the correctness of the assumption as to how the letter had been mailed, there was no doubt. There surely was someone who knew of Mildred's whereabouts as well as her intentions as to the immediate future. But to learn the identity of her friend at C. was a more than difficult task. The operatives he had employed were of the opinion that

the letter might be of some assistance and Aldine, therefore sent the same to her father at once upon his urgent request.

When the letter came to Paul he found that there was no hint nor intimation of any kind as to plans or whereabouts. It was a letter replete with a mother's love and written with an evidently studied effort to conceal any information that might lead to her location.

The most thorough and complete search was made throughout the city for any evidence or information as to Mildred's location or the direction she had taken. The cleverest men to be had worked untiringly, but nothing was elicited.

Similar inquiries were caused to be prosecuted in every city of any prominence throughout the South. A full description was sent as to Mildred to every hospital in all of these cities and particularly an enlistment of the services of the Red Cross Societies was had.

Though, Paul was, at first encouraged to believe and hope that only a few days would be necessary in order that his efforts would be successful, yet as days and finally weeks had passed with no news of the missing mother, disappointment began to be keenly felt by both Aldine and her father.

There began to be felt by Paul, the impression of the reality of effort upon the part of Mildred, to hide herself completely from the world. The realization of this became oppressive and he grew restive under the influnce of such a conviction.

In his own mind, he began to speculate as to the cause of her disappearance. That she could possibly be actuated by any desire to be permanently separated from her children, was entirely unreasonable. Why, the necessity or cause for the step that had been taken by her? He had learned long before how pained Mildred had been when absent from either of them. There was not only no inclination to have them away from her, but the contrary had always been true.

Was there any difference in conditions, now, as compared to then?

Yes! It suddenly came to him that there was.

Death had been the grim reaper that had made both of them free again.

He shuddered as the only reason that he could assign as the cause of her deliberate disappearance.

There could be but one reason. *She was secreting herself from him.* Why? Why? He asked himself this one question time and time again. The conviction began to force itself upon his unwilling mind that she should not be found by him.

There was, however, an added zeal to his continued and renewed efforts to find her. His every energy and resource were employed.

He had unsuccessfully, undertaken to ascertain the identity of the person who had almost regularly mailed letters written by the mother of Aldine. But the friend in whom such confidence had been placed had remained true and loyal and there was nothing learned in that direction.

Some nine months had gone by, without a word of information of Mildred, except the mysterious receipt, somewhat regularly, of letters which Aldine continued to receive.

Paul had to a very great extent neglected his immense business affairs for sometime and though by no means abandoning the search, had yielded to the necessity of turning his attention to matters of great importance.

Among other things, urgent demands had often been made by his representative in Cuba to personally visit the sugar cane plantation not far from Havana, because of extensive improvements needed there. Paul had determined to make a trip for the purpose of personally making an inspection of his interests there.

In the latter part of April, he left C. with that purpose in view, assuring Aldine of his early return. He had made the journey as far as to a point in Florida and had stopped at F. from which small steamers made daily trips to and from Havana.

Passage upon the "Idlewild" had been taken by him early one morning and he expected to reach Havana by the evening of the same day. An uneventful voyage throughout the day had been made, and there was much enjoyment had by Paul, as he comfortably sat out upon the upper deck breathing the pure air of the balmy spring weather. In the distance he could see Havana as the little ship plowed her way through the placid waters of the Atlantic. He and many other passengers were observing with

great interest the outlines of the old Spanish city and they had now reached a point about four miles from the inner harbor.

Suddenly and without any warning whatever, there came a terrific explosion from the engine room of the steamer. One of her boilers had for some inexplicable reason exploded, almost splitting the little vessel in twain. There was no opportunity for escape nor for rescue of any one. It was one of those strange and unaccountable disasters at sea that completely renders humanity so helpless and death so easy upon the ocean's waves. In an instant after the explosion, human beings and wreckage of the destroyed ship, were thrown into the ocean by reason of the demolition that so rapidly had taken place. Many of the crew upon the lower deck were instantly killed. Many of the passengers were killed and injured by the falling timbers and parts of the ship. In less time than that required for the noise of the explosion to have subsided, most of the passengers were swimming near parts of the ill fated vessel and attempting to save themselves by clinging to the shattered remnants of floating wreckage near by.

Fortunately, an outer harbor tug which happened to be near by, rapidly steamed to the scene of the disaster and gave immediate assistance to the struggling mass of swimming humanity to be seen upon the crest of the rolling waves. There was a rescue of a very large number.

Death had claimed the lives of more than a dozen

of the passengers, there being a large number who were seriously wounded.

Among others, who were taken aboard the tug from the sea, was Paul Hanley. When rescued he was unconsciously clinging to a piece of gunwale which had in some manner been torn loose when the explosion and wreckage of the ship came. There was no time for treatment of the injuries of any one. The tug in a very few minutes had steamed into the harbor and the wounded were rapidly taken to the nearest hospital and the dead to the most convenient morgue.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### FOUND AND LOST.

PAUL HANLEY had been immediately conveyed to the American Marine Hospital in Havana, when taken from the tug that had rescued him.

Upon examination being made it was at once determined by the surgeon in charge that his injuries were of a most serious and probably fatal character. His skull had been crushed to such an obvious extent, in some manner, that the most delicate of operations, trephining, was the only possible means by which life could be preserved. With his skull crushed and much of it resting and pushing against the brain, the unfortunate man, to be sure, was unconsciously moaning with his physical pain and suffering.

Thanks to the great advancement and skill of modern surgery, its marvelous feats have frequently stepped between life and death, by means of the operation performed upon Paul, so that the skill of now, as compared with the past, is one of the greatest of attainments in that most noted profession. The removal of the broken skull from off the brain and substitution of the silver plate had taken place.

The patient had undergone the operation and was being taken care of by the nurses assigned to the unconscious man.

Unfortunately, there was nothing found upon the clothing of Paul by which his identity could be ascertained. Beyond the knowledge that he was evidently an American, there was nothing to be gleaned. He was possessed of some considerable money which was found upon him, which guaranteed the good treatment his condition required.

As the days passed, the strong vigor of good health together with the very superior skill of the surgeons in charge, had brought returning consciousness to Paul—and there was every reasonable assurance that he would recover. It so happened that for the first time that memory came to him, one of the surgeons was at his bedside. His mind was perfectly clear and he readily recalled the suddenness of the explosion upon the steamer, but had no recollection as to how he had been injured. Upon being told that it would be only a short time until his recovery, he had insisted that no information should be given to Aldine or any one as to his injuries at that time. He was cautioned by the physician as to the necessity of quietude and much rest, and the doctor had just left his patient when he met the nurse in charge.

The door had been closed and he was giving the information of recovered mentality to the nurse, as they were standing in the hallway.

"Well, doctor, do you think that the patient will

recover?" the nurse interrogated, with what the doctor considered as unusual interest.

"Yes, I am sure that he will soon be a well man. And I want to say that the remarkable attention which you have given this patient is entitled to reward from him, and I shall most certainly speak to him about it," replied and added the doctor.

"No, doctor, I beg of you not to do so. I have only done my duty," she said to him as he was leaving.

The nurse now noiselessly opened the door leading into the room of the patient. She found he had his head averted as was required and that he had fallen into slumber again. The shades were down and the room darkened, so that there was but a small shaded globe of electric light in the room. It was so shaded that but little could be seen by Paul, under the direction of the doctor.

The nurse had taken her accustomed seat near the bedside and perfect quiet reigned in the room and nothing could be heard but the deep breathing of Paul.

Though he was apparently enjoying peaceful slumber, now and then he seemed to grow restless and finally awoke. As he stirred the nurse silently stepped to his side and placing her hand upon his forehead gently stroked it. Realizing the touch of a woman's hand, he asked:

"Oh, you are my nurse?"

As he spoke, he attempted to turn his head in her

direction. Seeing his intention, she at once said to him, in almost a whisper:

"No, you must not turn your head. The doctor insists you must not do so," she said at once to him, and upon her insistence he made no further effort.

"But, will you please give me a drink of water?" he asked of her.

His nurse quickly brought him a glass of water and was holding it to his lips while she carefully raised his head. He had drank the water and she had gently restored him to his pillow. As she did so he was enabled to see the face of his nurse.

"Mildred! My Mildred!" the afflicted man suddenly cried.

And, indeed, it was the one whom he had so long sought, the object of his heart's greatest desire.

Mildred had known that this moment must inevitably arrive and she had seriously debated in her mind if she should remain for its happening. But she never knew positively until this day that the wounded man would recover—and when being so informed by the doctor, she had but a moment of time after leaving him to determine what course she should pursue. She had determined, that since but a few hours remained until she would be relieved by another nurse, that she would risk his learning her identity during the short time and afterwards leave Paul in ignorance as to who she was.

As it was, she had failed, and she stood looking down into Paul's face.

"Paul—dear Paul, yes, it is Mildred. But you

must be quiet. If you suffer yourself to become excited, it will injure your chances of recovery."

Before speaking, she had taken hold of his outstretched hands, seating herself upon the side of the bed. She had tried to hide any emotion she might feel, but as she held his hands in hers, and looked into his face, there were tears in his as well as in her eyes.

There was now a long silence between them. Neither saw fit to speak. They looked long and searchingly into each other's very souls.

Mildred felt the gentleness of the pull of both of Paul's hands. In the weakness of his body, but with the strength of his heart, he was attempting to draw her to him. She did not resist, but divining his wish, slowly bent over him until their lips met, and lingered with the love that was now being renewed.

When Mildred withdrew from the side of Paul, she knew, and Paul saw, there was love's impress as the surging color came to her cheeks. The happiness that asserted itself upon his own countenance and which beamed through his very eyes, had made a new and joyous Paul.

"My Mildred, how I have, for months, hunted for you! And now, I have found you! How happy, how happy, I am!" he cried to her with his great elation.

"But, Paul, you should not have sought to have found me," she replied. "Our lives and ways must lie far apart."

Suddenly observing the time, she continued before he had an opportunity to reply:

"The relief nurse is due and will be here shortly. Now, Paul, I will be with you tomorrow. So I want you to rest and sleep well tonight. You must get well and you can only do so by obeying the orders of the doctor," she said.

And it was just at this juncture that another nurse quickly entered the door, which prevented any further conversation between them.

After a short conversation with the new nurse, in the presence of the patient, in which her relief expressed great pleasure over the improvement of their charge, Mildred quietly withdrew from the room being followed by the eyes of Paul as she passed through the door.

Upon her return to Paul's bedside the following day, Mildred saw every evidence of rapid improvement of her patient. The doctor was present when she entered. Paul had been permitted the services of the barber and his face presented a great change in every way. He was already asking the doctor how many more days he would be confined to his bed and was in a decidedly cheerful frame of mind.

"Well, not very many. But if I had the good fortune that you have had to have been nursed so faithfully as you have been by Mrs. Caldwell, I would not be in a great hurry to get out!" replied the doctor as he smiled at his bit of pleasantry. He little knew how ardently his patient sanctioned what he had

said, but if he had looked into his eyes at this moment, he might have found ready approval.

Paul was quick to notice that Mildred bore evidence of but little sleep, and commented upon the same. She did not offer any denial, but rather admitted it. He could see what he believed to be the signs of worry as though she was troubled in mind about something.

And he was not wrong in his conjecture, as he afterwards learned.

Dwelling upon a topic of conversation interesting to both—their children—they found much to say to each other, she asking in detail and he answering in kind. He had told her with great pride of Aldine's husband and of the progress of George at school.

It was while he was speaking of Aldine with the fondness of his love for her, that he was enabled to introduce a subject of conversation, that he was anxiously wishing for and that she had feared and wished to avoid.

"Yes, Mildred, dear brave Aldine has become a woman now, and needs the same thing which her father wishes to make her happy. And that is you, —Mildred. My every minute from now on, will be of impetuous anxiety to get well, so that I may again claim the mother of my children!"

As Paul spoke, he saw Mildred's countenance change as if she were suffering great pain and when she replied to him he found a verification of his observation.

"Please, Paul, I beg of you, do not add to my great

unhappiness by speaking again that way to me. I propose being frank with you."

As she spoke, she sat by his side and took one of his hands in both of her's. Continuing, as she gently pressed his hand she said:

"I hope you will never say again, what you have just said. I spent a sleepless night thinking over how wrong it was for me to have remained here after you were brought here. But I could not leave you when your condition was so seriously dangerous. Yet when the doctor assured me that you would recover, I should never have come back. You must be perfectly quiet, in order that you may rapidly recover."

Several times during the day, he made attempts to talk with her upon the subject of his love for her, but invariably he would be admonished into silence in the same manner. Indeed, his condition should not have permitted of any extended conversation upon any subject. Mildred was tenderly attentive to him throughout the day, sitting by his side holding his hand, which he would not let her remove, though he at intervals, dozed into short periods of slumber.

When the time came for her to be relieved, she had leaned over him and fondly kissed him good bye.

On the following morning the doctor came early into the room and, after an examination of Paul, sat down by his bedside.

"Mr. Hanley, your nurse for some reason, has seen fit to leave us. I got to my office, here at the hospital, this morning and found a note addressed to you, which I hand you. Perhaps it will shed some

light upon the subject as to the cause of her leaving. I do not understand her conduct."

As the doctor finished, he handed the enclosure to Paul, who frantically opened and read the following: "Dear Paul:

"I could not bear to remain and have you say to me that which my heart told me you would sooner or later say. Poor Mildred loves you with all her unhappy heart, but I know that it is best for me to go away. I cannot bear to add to my unhappiness by telling you that which would pain me more than I can ever tell you.

"I know, now, that you will recover and that there is no longer a necessity for me to remain. I shall leave tonight for America.

"Please, dear Paul, believe that the course I am pursuing is for the best. My love has been and will ever be, yours—but I will show it by refusing to impose myself upon you. I shall keep myself posted as to your condition.

"MILDRED."

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### LOVE BALANCES THE SCALES.

WHEN Paul had read the short note from Mildred, he for a time closed his eyes without comment. When he opened them, he said to the doctor:

"My dear doctor, if you knew how seriously important it is for me to find Mrs. Caldwell you would hasten my recovery if you could."

His voice and manner showed the great emotion that he felt. He felt that he was impelled to, and he did tell the doctor that she had been his wife and that she had been greatly wronged by him many years before; and that under a misapprehension, she was avoiding his overtures for a reconciliation. That he had vainly searched for her on the continent, and had only met her by reason of his accident. He read the line of the letter as to her intention to keep advised as to his condition, to the doctor.

Immediately, the doctor said to Paul:

"Well, it is evident that she expects to communicate with someone connected with the hospital. I am sure of that. If she does, Hanley, we will find her without doubt. Be of good cheer, my man, we will not fail."

Paul took much comfort in what the doctor said.

When the other nurse was accosted by Paul, she professed much ignorance of the intentions of Mildred.

He was grieved that he should so soon lose Mildred after finding her, and his disappointment became so great that it doubtless retarded his recovery.

Paul was rapidly recovering, however, notwithstanding his mental worry and was soon to be discharged. It was about two weeks afterward, that the doctor came in one morning with his face clearly showing that he had something of interest to say to Paul. He had an open letter in his hand, which had been addressed to Mildred's associate nurse and mailed from Savannah, Ga. The letter contained nothing but an inquiry as to the condition of Paul. Mildred was reminding the nurse of her promise to write to her several days before, but stated that she had failed to receive any letter from her. She gave her address, concluding by saying that she would remain there at that address for a period of five days.

Whether the good doctor had committed any violation of the Cuban laws in opening another's mail was never known by Paul. Being assured that his condition was such that he could travel, but that it would be wise for someone to accompany him, preparations being complete, there remained only the procuring of some physician to attend him as he took the steamer that night. Paul had asked the

advice of the doctor who had been so kind to him as to whom he should get.

"That has been arranged for, already, Hanley. There will be just as good a doctor accompanying you as you have had here. For, by thunder, I am going with you, myself. I propose seeing this thing through," said the doctor with much warmth of feeling and interest.

The warm gratitude shown in Paul's face, immensely pleased the good hearted man.

Some three days afterwards, a certain Cubanized American doctor, with great dignity and greater noise, knocked upon the door of room 24 of Hotel Gordon, in the city of Savannah. When the door was opened, two attaches of the American Marine Hospital of Havana, very cordially shook hands with each other. One of them was Mildred, who occupied the room.

Her surprise at seeing Doctor Wilder at once took the form of alarm. It was instantly made to disappear, however, by the doctor, who said to her:

"I have a patient down in the hotel parlor, who requires your immediate attention. Come on down, right away, because I fear that he will suffer if he does not get a good nurse, at once."

Somehow, there was but little hesitation upon the part of Mildred. She was attired in hat and cloak and descended to the parlor, which she entered. The doctor had led her to the door and had discreetly disappeared.

For the second time, within a month, Paul and Mildred were brought together.

"I am well again, Mildred, and I have sought you, to tell you that you shall never elude me again," he said as he led her to a couch.

"But Paul," she said with her face showing intense sadness. "You certainly understood me when I both spoke and wrote to you."

"No, I did not understand, nor do I think my Mildred understood, either. For that reason I am here to ask you again, to come back to me and be the wife of the man who has both loved and wronged you."

As Paul spoke, he could see that Mildred was attempting to steel herself against him and he awaited her reply.

For a moment, she hesitated, but as she raised her head and looked into his face, a strong resolution was depicted upon her countenance.

"Dear Paul," she began, "on the night before I left you, I never spent a more wretched and sleepless night. There was no presumption upon my part when I tell you, that when you spoke to me on the first day, I knew you would say that which you have just said—I have felt it, from the time your dear good wife pased away. I felt that in a reasonable length of time, you would come to me and tell me that you still loved me. I say this because I know and have always known since the day we met in Mr. McElroy's office, just before you secured your divorce, when Aldine came near breaking both of our

hearts, that you still had a heart for me. And God knows, Paul, no moment has ever gone by without my heart responding to your love. I tell you now, I have always loved you, Paul—and dear Paul, I love and more than worship you now."

Before she could finish, he interrupted by saying:

"Well, dear Mildred, when you know that both of us are yet bound by——"

Mildred stopped him by saying:

"My dear Paul, you must let me continue. There can be no doubt as to where my heart is and has always been, and that is what makes it so hard for me. When you were first brought into the hospital, and after the operation, when I could sit by your side, how often did I pray as I held your hand and stroked your forehead, and kissed your lips while you were lying there unconsciously suffering, that you would be spared. This was all because I loved—loved you. That was all. And, oh the pain of it! For I knew that it must be a fruitless love! Do not think that I did not know that your big and generous heart would some day impel you to come to me. But I made up my mind then, that I would spare you. I saw then, and my own heart and mind told me, that I could never debase myself by causing you further unhappiness. I know my duty toward you and myself at this time. I could never be so guilty that I would take you back into the sad and gloomy past. Why, do you not know, Paul, that if I re-married you, every sight of me would be an eternal reminder of my sin, my curse and my everlasting damnation?

"Can you not see that the world's education as to the rights of husband and wife have two different standards? And the world is right. Whatever may be the standard that may permit the easy condonation of the man for all his errors and his sins, there is no possible justification for the fall of his wife. There is but the one standard for the wife. It is the exaction of purity. It is the requirement, always, of virtue and its reward. Do not think that I am preaching to you, for I know and my years of suffering attest the full enormity of my own sin.

"Yes, again, I say that the criterion of the world is correct. Mine is the deep and unforgiveable sin of all. And down deep in my heart, I am wondering if I do not, and if I ought not to think less of you, when I realize that you would take me back as your wife—me—me—me,—the adulteress, who brought shame upon your children and the odium of the world and perpetual displeasure of God as against myself. Think Paul! What, indeed, what would the world say? It would first point its finger of scorn at you and then turn upon and hiss me into the oblivion of hate and never ending cruelty in its persecution of me. Our every appearance would be the signal for the derision and the coldness, the world would have in store for both of us.

"Can you and do you not see how utterly impossible it is?

"For your sake and mine I refuse to be taken to your heart as your wife, again. It is your happiness that I am first considering. Please let me go on as

I have started—live the just exile I have sought and that should await me. I have sought to avoid you and thereby live the rest of my life as I have planned!"

As the soul tortured woman continued to earnestly shatter every vision of his dream of happiness, Paul felt his heart grow weak within him. He could see the great determination in her face and he had not failed to note it in what she had said.

Weakened as he was, however, he essayed reply. She had expressed views that had so many times been firmly fixed, and as he thought, settled in his own mind forever; but he had reasoned, of late, and he was now, with his love and his heart and felt the wisdom and justice of the great law of the Saviour's forgiveness, easy of application.

"Mildred," he replied, "you spoke as if yours is the unforgiveable sin. I am saying to you that with the precedent established by the Saviour——"

Mildred interrupted him by saying:

"Yes, Paul, I know the beautiful story and the picture portrayed of His forgiving the fallen woman. Indeed, it is the one great precedent of His charity. *But, Paul, the difficulty is, it is a precedent that has never yet been followed by the world.*"

"Listen to me, my Mildred," replied Paul. "Your eagerness to condemn makes you unjust to your own dear self. You array the world, together with your self, as your enemies. You speak as though your sin was the only one. You consign yourself to a position and punishment that make you assume also

the torture for and of other's sins. Sweet Mildred, I have not traversed the continent, time after time, in the hope of finding you, in order to remind you of your wrong and then say magnanimously that I *forgive you.* My own life has ever been before me. I too, have suffered and I can say, as have you, that my real heart has always been yours. I have had before me the first realization of love's dream. How vividly my mind has always taken me back to torture me, I can never tell you. To me, had ever appeared the pride of my early love for you, and my ecstacy, when I saw how deeply you loved me! How my heart with exultation, throbbed, when I saw you as the loving mother of noble little Aldine! Ah, indeed, they were the happy days of a love that seemed adamant against all wrong. How pure, how noble, and oh what an angel you were when I left you to travel and go upon the road. Yes, upon my road to ruin! Do I not recall how I fell for the first time? May the ever loving God forgive me, do I not know that my own life became the living scandal of that part of the country? Do I not recall how, like a queen, you sat upon the throne of motherhood and love, and freely forgave that which I had so often denied, but finally admitted to you? Do you think I can forget how like the skulking knave, I made you smile with love, as I made promises of a reform, only to break them so often as opportunity appeared? All this time, you had never ceased to love and forgive me. Dearest of all women, hear me! Uppermost in my mind always, has been the knowledge,

that *I killed and murdered your love for me,* just as the prosecutor said. How his words have rung in my ears! Could I have only been true! That is an answer to all your objections. Mine was the crime against you and mine.

"I care not what the world may say. I have come to you and I am asking that you forgive me. I scorn the miserable cant of the hypocrisy of the *world.* Let us have done with that which is the living lie. I, who have trampled the purity of your love for me under my feet, who deserted you and my own, who wrecked and made impossible happiness for you, and who caused the first tears and heartaches, I, the father of Aldine and George, ask merely that you may forget *my own* infamy and that you may forgive *me.*

"Yes, I know the falsehood that the world has ever taught and that it breathes now. Its education and its oppression have made the eyes of the nobility of womanhood fail ever, to see the sins of her husband. The world has always commanded that she must ever condone whatever might be the transgressions of man. It has extended a privilege to man and punishment to woman, and at the same time ever requiring her to unceasingly keep her own house in order.

"But I prefer to align myself, not with the 'world,' but with Him who has taught the justice of His own laws of love and charity to mankind. Woman must not be compelled always to suffer and condone, without recompense. I prefer to adopt His standard—

that of the one law and the one love. Ah, my dear Mildred, *must woman ever and man never forgive?*"

Paul had taken Mildred into his arms and with her head resting upon his breast and looking with beaming love into his face, she yielded to the affection he was now bestowing upon her. Paul's argument had prevailed.

Love had balanced the scales and Mildred was a happy woman once again.

THE END.

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